THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUL

EDMOND HOLMES

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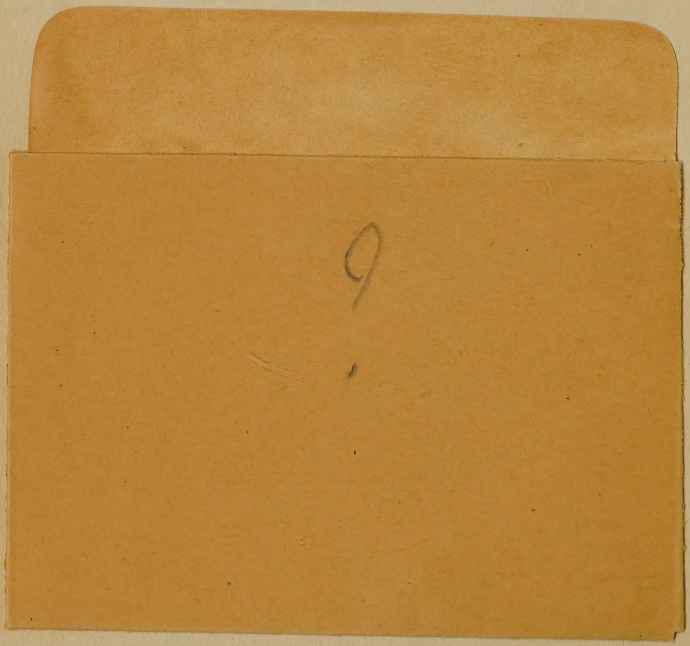

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THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUL

By the same Author

WHAT IS AND WHAT MIGHT BE
IN DEFENCE OF WHAT MIGHT BE
THE TRAGEDY OF EDUCATION
THE NEMESIS OF DOCILITY
THE CREED OF CHRIST
THE CREED OF BUDDHA
THE SILENCE OF LOVE
THE CREED OF MY HEART
ETC.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUL

A TRACT FOR TEACHERS

Being an Attempt to determine what Limits, if any, there are to the Transforming Influence of Education

BY

EDMOND HOLMES

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THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUL

CHAPTER I

THE LAW OF GROWTH

For all who educate and for all who are interested in education there is one question which is of paramount importance: What can education do for him who is to be educated? What changes can it work in him? What ends can it set before itself, and him? To this question there is an obvious answer. Education can do one thing, if no other—one thing which includes all other things; it can further—or hinder—growth. So I, for one, instinctively assume. So I have always instinctively assumed ever since I began to think seriously about education. This assumption has another behind it—namely, that human nature comes under the law of growth. What warrant is there for these assumptions? Let us begin with the latter. Does human nature, not on its physical side only, but in all its length

and breadth and depth, come under the great law which dominates the worlds of plant and animal life? I have always assumed, and I must continue to assume, that it does. I cannot by any effort of thought think otherwise. The question is, I believe, debated; but I cannot take part in the debate. So far as I am concerned, the question does not exist. Wherever there is life there is growth (or the opposite of growth—decay); and I find it impossible—I can use no weaker word—to separate in my thought the idea of life from that of growth. In the years of childhood and adolescence we see the gradual unfolding, not of physical powers and tendencies only, but also of those which are mental, moral, æsthetic, spiritual. If this process of unfolding is not to be called growth, I do not know what is the right name for it; nor do I know what growth means.

But, because I assume that human life in its totality comes under the law of growth, I am not therefore bound to assume that it comes under the law or laws of *physical* growth. When Professor Bateson says that "Shakespeare once existed as a speck of protoplasm not so big as a pin's head," he begs, as we shall presently see, a very large question. If we are to predicate growth of the whole human being, we must use the word in its widest and most comprehensive sense, we must have in mind only what is really

essential in the process of growth. Now what is essential in the process of growth is the realization of potentiality, the transformation of a complex of possibilities into a fully developed organism, of what can be into what is. Such a transformation would not be possible if the organism, the ultimate product of growth, however large and complex it might be, were not present, in promise and potency, in the seed from which it grows. Each seed is fraught with its own destiny. It will grow, if it is allowed to grow, to what is in large measure a predetermined form. I mean by this that its expansive activities will move in a particular channel and arrive, in the fulness of time—if all goes well—at a particular goal. The channel may not be accurately mapped out. The goal may be a matter for conjecture rather than for positive knowledge. But that the expanding life has a channel and a goal of its own is certain. The oak-tree is in the acorn, not in the beechnut; the banyan-tree,

> "With all its thousand downward-dropping stems
> Waiting to fall from all its thousand boughs,
> And all its lakhs and lakhs of lustrous leaves
> Waiting to push to sunlight,"

is in the minute seed of the banyan fruit, which, though scarcely distinguishable from the seed of the ordinary fig, is fraught with an entirely different destiny. If, then, human nature in its

totality comes under the law of growth, the question at once arises : What are the possibilities of human development ? What is it that is to the human embryo what the oak-tree is to the acorn or the banyan-tree to the seed of the banyan fruit ?

Before we attempt to answer this question we shall do well to ask ourselves what is to be our starting-point in this enterprise. In other words, how far back are we to go in quest of the human embryo ? By human embryo I mean the embryo of the whole human being, not of the human body only. The acorn may be regarded as the embryo of the oak-tree. But the acorn was once a mere speck on an oak twig, and had to go through a long process of growth before it was able to detach itself from the parent tree and start on an independent course of growth. This analogy, though we must not overwork it, is at least suggestive. It is as a new-born baby that the embryo of the human being starts on an independent course of growth. Let us, then, make the new-born baby our starting-point. If we go further back, if we go back to Professor Bateson's " speck of protoplasm," we shall make the grave mistake of resolving psychology into biology just when we are attempting the solution of the greatest of all psychological problems.

Let us now return to my initial assumption. If human nature in its totality comes under the

law of growth, it is not an assumption but a legitimate conclusion that the function of education is to foster growth. But what does this mean? What specific duties are we to assign to the educator? What is the scope of her work? (I use the feminine pronoun because nine educators out of ten are women.) What is its ideal goal? The work of the educator begins in the nursery, and is carried on through the years of childhood and adolescence into the adult life of the pupil. To foster physical growth is part of her duty. Here she comes into line with the planter, the farmer, and the gardener, from whom she has much to learn. The trainer of plant and animal life gives his charges as favourable an environment as possible, and leaves the rest to their own activities. But their activities, owing to the operation of the law of heredity, are strictly predetermined, and the task of providing a favourable environment is therefore comparatively simple. The plant and the animal are in the grip of physical necessity. Their destiny has been marked out for them by their breeding. They may fall far short of it. But they cannot transcend it.

It is the same, though possibly not to the same extent, with the body of man. But what of the higher planes of his being? There he feels —and the feeling grows stronger as the dawning light of consciousness grows fuller and clearer—

that it is open to him to help or hinder the process of his own growth. We cannot get behind this feeling of freedom. A profound philosophy of life is implicit in it. May we trust it? If we may—and we may because we must—the scope of education will expand indefinitely and the opportunities and responsibilities of the educator will know no limits. For if the growth of the child on the higher planes of his being is not predetermined (in the narrower sense of that word), if it is not limited, as is his bodily growth, by the stress of physical heredity, then the problem of giving him a favourable environment becomes, owing to our ignorance of his possibilities, infinitely complex and far-reaching; and though the educator must do what the grower and breeder always do, and she too seldom does —allow her pupil to do the business of growing for himself—she must also do far more than that; she must help him to ally himself, as it were, with his own expansive tendencies, to throw his will-power into the work of furthering, not hindering, the process of his growth. Above all, she must help him to discover his latent resources, to develop his latent potentialities, to realize his unknown and mysterious self.

The hypothesis of human freedom commits her to this great adventure. But we must not, thus early, take so much on her behalf for granted. So, instead of assuming at the outset that ideally

there are no limits to the transforming influence of education, let us ask what limits, if any, there are. This, I repeat, is the question of questions for all who educate and for all who are interested in education. To ask the question is equivalent to asking whether man, though subject to the law of growth, is exempt from the necessity which seems to bind all other living things of growing to a predetermined form; and if so, in what sense he is exempt, and to what extent.

CHAPTER II

HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

A. The Physical Plane [1]

I have now raised the vexed question of heredity and environment, and I must try to think it out. Growth is, in its essence, the realization of potentiality. As far as our experience goes, potentiality is always the product of generation, not of creation—an inheritance, not a gift; and the realization of potentiality is always effected through reaction to environment. It follows that there are two chief factors in growth—*heredity*, which gives us realizable potentiality,

[1] When I speak of the physical plane I am thinking of the physical side of physique and of that only. I do not forget that physique and spirituality (to use a comprehensive term), however much we may try to separate them in thought, will insist on overlapping and even interpenetrating one another—that *expression*, for example, is a quasi-spiritual feature or aspect of the outer man, just as *temperament*, for example, is a quasi-physical feature or aspect of the inner man. But, having found it convenient, for the better ordering of my thoughts, to separate the physical from the higher planes, I must as far as possible exclude from the former whatever is not purely physical.

and *environment*, which makes the realization of potentiality possible. Why, then, is heredity so often opposed to environment? Why is there a controversy as to the parts which environment and heredity, "nature" and "nurture," respectively play in human life? Why does Professor Bateson tell us that "the long-standing controversy as to the relative importance of nature and nurture . . . is drawing to an end, and of the overwhelming greater significance of nature there is no longer any possibility of doubt"? Why does Dr. Chalmers Mitchell say, on the contrary, that "with regard to mental, moral, and emotional qualities, which are of preponderating importance in man . . . nurture is incomparably more important than nature"? How has this question arisen, and what is its real significance? It has been said—and with some show of reason—that heredity and environment are the warp and woof of the tissue of life. But if these are the parts that they respectively play, there is no controversy between them. And perhaps if we could state correctly the question which, unknown to ourselves, we are trying to answer, we should find that our opposition of heredity to environment, of "nature" to "nurture," was based on a misconception, and that the question, as it was usually stated, was unreal. Meanwhile, however, we must face the fact that many practical problems perplex

us which raise, or seem to raise, the question to which Professor Bateson and Dr. Chalmers Mitchell have given diametrically opposite answers. For example: the child of criminal parents, reared in a criminal slum, becomes a criminal. Is his criminality "in his blood," or is it the result of his unfortunate environment? Or, if both causes have been at work, which has been the predominant influence? Is the servility of the German people in the blood of the German race (if there is such a thing), or is it due to a tradition which has had an historical origin and which now permeates the environing atmosphere into which every German is born? Is the apparent inferiority of the "lower orders" to the "upper middle classes" (let us say) in intellect, manners, and general culture vital or accidental? Is it due to an inferior strain of blood or to a less favourable environment? These are legitimate questions, and their practical significance is obvious.

But do they really commit us to a consideration of the parts which heredity and environment respectively play in human life? I think not. I think that the question which is actually at issue has been obscured by a fog of confused thought, and that the ultimate source of that confusion has been our failure to distinguish between *racial* and *lineal* heredity, between the *common* and the *differential* elements in our

inheritance. By the common elements I mean those which we inherit from the whole human race and which we therefore share with all our fellow-men. By the differential elements I mean those which we inherit from our own more recent line of ancestors and which are therefore in some special sense our own. The distinction between what we inherit from the whole human race (or perhaps from some remoter source of being) and what we inherit from our own lineal ancestors is a real one ; and it is a pity that it is so often ignored. Examples drawn from the physical side of human life will help me to make my meaning clear. Though no two men are exactly alike, yet all men have the same bodily structure, and each man inherits what is essential in his bodily structure from the whole human race. Thus every normal infant has so many bones arranged in such and such ways, such and such organs arranged in such and such ways, such and such limbs, such and such facial features and senses, an elaborate system of veins, nerves, and muscles, a series of skins, the beginnings of hair, nails, and teeth. These constitute the infant's racial inheritance. But infant differs from infant in respect of the size, form, colour, and proportions, both of its frame as a whole and of each of its constituent parts ; and these differential elements constitute its lineal inheritance, for it owes them—not wholly perhaps, but

in large measure—to its more recent line of ancestors, to what we call, loosely and inaccurately, its " strain of blood."

Or put the matter thus. Racial heredity gives a man a human nose. Lineal heredity helps to determine the contour of his nose. Racial heredity gives a man a pair of human eyes. Lineal heredity helps to determine the colour and setting of his eyes. Racial heredity gives a man a human mouth. Lineal heredity helps to determine the size and shape of the mouth. And so on.

Now it is certain that when we oppose heredity to environment, we are thinking of lineal, not of racial heredity; of the differential, not of the common elements in human nature. We take the common elements for granted. When we speak of the physique which the child inherits, we take for granted that he has so many bones, such and such organs, such and such a system of veins, nerves, muscles, and the rest. The child has these because he is a human being, not because he is the child of certain parents or the descendant of certain ancestors. We do not give a thought to the common elements in his bodily structure. What we are thinking of when we speak of his physical resemblance to his parents or his ancestors are the differential elements—the build of his skull, the contour of his nose, the colour and setting of his eyes, the size and shape of his mouth, the tint and texture of his

hair, his height, weight, colouring, form, proportions, bodily vigour, and so forth.

It is also certain that when we oppose heredity to environment, we are thinking of environment as coming in some sort and some measure under human control.

These reservations are all-important. To oppose heredity as such to environment as such, to ask which of the two influences plays the larger part in the process of growth, would be nonsense. As well might we ask (to revert to our borrowed simile) which counts for more in the weaving of a tissue, the warp or the woof. But when the reservations which I have indicated have been made, we begin to see a meaning in our much-debated problem. Does lineal heredity count for so much in human life as to commit us to a fatalistic, and therefore pessimistic, "theory of things"? If not, how are we to counteract its influence, when it happens to be harmful or unduly restrictive? By giving a favourable environment to its victim, is an obvious answer to this question. But environment can do no more than enable inherited potentiality to realize itself. How, then, can it remove, or even lessen, the disabilities which are inherent in one's "blood"? In one way—and one way only. By allying itself with racial heredity; in other words, by allowing the potentialities of our racial inheritance to realize themselves and play their

several parts. The more the racial element in one's inheritance outweighs the lineal, the more the potentialities of one's racial inheritance outweigh the actualities, the greater will be the scope for the transforming influence of environment, and the less will heredity (in the conventional sense of the word) count in one's life.

This much we can see at the outset. Let us now consider a concrete case. A, the child of criminal parents, born and reared in a criminal slum, grows up a criminal. Does not this illustrate the force of "heredity"? Let us assume that it does. But B, another child of the same parents, born in the same slum, having been taken away from it early in life and brought up in respectable surroundings, grows up a respectable member of society. What has happened? Has "environment" triumphed over "heredity"? No, but racial heredity, having been given fair play, has proved stronger than lineal heredity. It is probable that B would not have been regenerated had he not been given a favourable environment. But it is certain that he would not have been regenerated had he not, as a human being, had in him certain social and ethical potentialities which were waiting to be realized. What environment did in his case, what it does in all similar cases, is to enable racial heredity, the nature of man as man, to bring its appropriate reserves of potentiality into action.

The question, then, which we have to consider is not what parts do environment and heredity respectively play in human life, but what parts do racial and lineal heredity respectively play in that great drama. Let us first consider this question in relation to the physical plane of life. Our starting-point is the body of the new-born baby. It is not until the baby is born that its environment comes in any appreciable degree under human control. During its pre-natal life its environment is under the control of "Nature"; and though the mother can do much to thwart the action of Nature, she can do nothing to aid it except in the sense of giving it fair play.

Now in the baby's physical inheritance the preponderant element is undoubtedly the racial. The possession of a nose is of much more importance than the shape of the nose. The possession of eyes than the colour of the eyes. The possession of a mouth than the size of the mouth. And so on. The pressure of lineal heredity on the individual is the pressure of a few centuries—at most perhaps, as in the case of the pure-bred Jew, of twenty or thirty. The pressure of racial heredity is the pressure of myriads of centuries—of all the ages, one might almost say, since life began. The pressure of lineal heredity is the pressure of a few scores of ancestors. The pressure of racial heredity is the pressure of unnumbered millions of men.

Yet it is on the physical plane that the directive, and therefore restrictive, influence of heredity is greatest, and the transforming influence of environment least. The explanation of this is simple. On the physical plane there are no great reserves of potentiality for environment to draw upon. Or, if there are, its power of drawing upon them is strictly limited. As far as it goes, the body of the new-born child is an actuality, an accomplished fact. Years of growth await it. But the process of growing will be carried on within narrow limits and, in the main, along predetermined lines. Environment can do much for the child. In a sense it can do everything. But it cannot work miracles. It cannot give him a third eye, or a sixth finger, or a thirty-third tooth. Nor can it add appreciably to his predestined strength or stature. If a child has it in him to grow, under perfectly favourable conditions, to the height of six feet, a bad environment may make him fall short of that limit, but no environment, however good, will enable him to transcend it. The influence of environment in what I may call the downward direction is limited only by death. In the upward direction it is limited by the physical constitution of man. From the point of view of physical development, the average environment of mankind, especially in what are called civilized countries, is very far from ideal. And because there is room in it for

endless improvement, we are apt to overestimate the transforming influence of environment on physique. It is but right that we should labour incessantly to improve the material conditions under which men live. But even if we could give the growing child an ideal environment we should do no more than enable him to fulfil his physical destiny. And that destiny is strictly limited. Or if there is an element of ideality, and therefore of infinity, in it, if even such physical perfection as man, whether collective or individual, has it in him to attain, is in a sense unattainable, the goal is near and cannot be transcended. Favourable physical conditions, if continued for some generations, might raise the average height of a nation by two or three inches; but even if they were continued for 10,000 years they would not raise the average height of the nation to six and a half feet. The movement towards physical perfection is perhaps an infinite "series"; but if so, its infinity, like that of an arithmetical series which advances by ever-diminishing fractions, has finite limits.

The reason, then, why lineal heredity counts for so much on the physical plane is that racial heredity has fixed the typical form to which the individual is predestined to grow, and that the transforming influence of environment in what I have called the upward direction is therefore comparatively small.

It is true that A, whose physical inheritance is inferior to B's, may, under the influence of a better environment, become the stronger and healthier man. But the explanation of this is, not that A has been transformed beyond recognition by his favourable surroundings, but that B, living under unfavourable conditions, has seriously deteriorated. It is because man as man cannot alter his physical frame or constitution, that the individual man cannot materially alter (except for the worse) the face or figure or constitution which he inherits from his forefathers. It is because man as man cannot alter the arrangement and general modelling of his facial features, that the individual man cannot materially alter (except for the worse) the build of his nose, or the colour of his eyes, or the shape of his mouth. It is because man as man cannot transcend the limits which racial heredity imposes on him, that the individual cannot appreciably transcend the limits which lineal heredity imposes on him. If "environment" is to triumph over "heredity"—in other words, if the influence of environment on the individual life is to outweigh that of lineal heredity, to the extent (for example) of removing or seriously lessening "inherited" disabilities—it must, as I have said, have large reserves of racial or common potentiality to draw upon. On the physical plane it has not such reserves, for the physical potentialities of

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the human animal have to a large extent been realized in the course of his evolution, and the margin in reserve is small.

In what relation, then, do lineal and racial heredity stand to one another on the physical plane? The latter is incomparably the larger and more important element; but from the point of view of the controversy between "environment" and "heredity" its preponderance scarcely counts. Under the influence of a good environment a child will make good growth. Under the influence of a bad environment he will make poor growth. But in either case he will grow towards a more or less precisely predetermined form. Predetermined, in the main and in the mass and also in systematized detail, by racial heredity; but in outline and in individuality of detail, by lineal heredity. And as it is the outline which first catches the eye, as we are naturally interested in what is differential in a man's face and figure, as we instinctively take a man's racial inheritance—the "constant and common" element in his physique—for granted, we say—and (in spite of the great preponderance of the racial element) we are on the whole justified in saying—that lineal heredity counts for much in the bodily life of man. And if we are asked what part it plays in his physical development, we answer that it transmits to him his racial inheritance and modifies it, puts the stamp of

individuality on it, in the course of transmission ; in other words, that it determines the particular lines along which, in response to the influence of environment—be that environment good or bad—the individual child will realize his racial inheritance and develop into an adult man.

CHAPTER III

HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT—*continued*

B. The Higher Planes

When we leave the physical plane behind us we pass into another world—a world of mysteries and infinities, a world of fathomless depths, of dark spaces, of unknown possibilities, a world of

"Far-folded mists and gleaming halls of morn."

The body of the new-born child is a concrete actuality. Its destiny—even its ideal destiny—is virtually fixed, partly by racial, partly by lineal heredity. The child may easily miss that destiny. The chances are that he will not fully realize it. It is certain that he will not transcend it. His "soul," on the other hand, is a complex of potentialities—mental, emotional, æsthetic, moral, spiritual—an undefinable, illimitable, inextricable tangle of latent tendencies, capacities, instincts, passions, desires. Some of these will soon press for realization. Others will wait their time in the background. Others, in the absence of a favourable environment, will remain shadowy

possibilities to the end of the child's life. Others would remain for ever unknown and unguessed at, unless, like a flash of lightning at midnight, some supreme crisis should suddenly reveal their presence. Beyond these there is impenetrable darkness; but a wall of darkness is not necessarily a wall of limitation.

In this vast complex of potentialities how much does the child owe to racial, how much to lineal heredity? How much is his because he is a human being, how much because he is of such and such a "seed"? We cannot say. The question, as I have stated it, has not, I think, been fully considered; but by implication it has often been asked and answered, though no answer has yet been given which can be accepted as authoritative. For this is the point in which the controversy between heredity and environment really centres; and in that controversy even the experts take diametrically opposite sides, the Mendelians, for example, assuring us that "of the overwhelmingly greater significance of nature (heredity) there is no longer any possibility of doubt," while the Epigenesists (if that is their correct title) are equally confident that "nurture (environment) is inconceivably more important than nature."

When doctors disagree, when they flatly contradict one another, what can an amateur do but try to think the matter out for himself?

This particular matter is, I need hardly say, by no means easy for anyone, whether expert or amateur, to think out. Indeed, it is the very magnitude of the task that confronts him which justifies the amateur in venturing to grapple with it. In the presence of what is infinite and ultimate the difference between expert and amateur becomes wholly negligible. The expert is one who has specialized in a particular field of inquiry. But who can specialize in the fundamental problems of life ?

When we try to determine the limits (if any) of our racial inheritance, we are faced at the outset by one almost insuperable difficulty. To say with any approach to accuracy what potentialities other than physical are latent in a newborn baby, is for obvious reasons impossible. That the baby will in due season think, reason, plan, purpose, love, sympathize, imagine, and so forth may safely be predicted. But the range, the reach, the latent possibilities of these great tendencies—in this case and in that, and even in the average human being—are wholly unknown to us. Until potentiality has begun to realize itself we know as little about it as about the resources of an undiscovered land. As the baby becomes successively a child, an adolescent, and an adult man, his potentialities gradually realize themselves, and it becomes possible for us to study them. But, unhappily, while

this is going on, education (in the widest and least technical sense of the word) is doing its deadly work—a work which is not the less deadly because, things being as they are, it is in large measure unavoidable—its work of cramping, warping, atrophying, devitalizing the growing soul. For as a rule only so much of our inherited potentiality is drawn upon in each case as will enable the child to play with decent success the part in life which circumstances—controlled in the main by the accident of his birth—are likely to assign to him. That amount varies greatly from case to case. If a child is predestined to enter one of the learned professions, an attempt will be made by those who educate him to realize potentialities which would remain dormant if he were predestined to become a peasant or a miner. But at best the amount which will be realized by the time the child arrives at maturity will be but an insignificant, and probably ill-selected and inharmoniously distributed, fraction of the mysterious whole. And the pity of it is that, as students of human nature, we are apt to assume that tendencies which have been left uncultivated—artistic, musical, literary, scientific, social, or whatever they may be—do not exist. The son of an agricultural labourer grows up an uncouth and uncultured boor; and we assume off-hand that he had no inherent capacity for refinement or culture; but it is possible, to say

the least, that had he been brought up in a refined and cultured family he would have made as good a response to the stimulus of the environment as if he had been born a child of the house.

Things being as they are, then, the student of human nature has to choose between two alternatives. In the baby the higher nature of man has not yet begun to reveal itself. In the adult or even in the adolescent it has almost certainly been marred and mutilated by injudicious and inadequate "nurture." As it is better, on the whole, to grope in the dark than to follow a misleading sign-post, I propose to begin by exploring the unknown possibilities of the undeveloped child. This means that my adventures and experiments will be imaginative rather than practical, and that my appeals to experience will in the main be appeals to reason and common sense.

At a very early age the baby will begin to talk. In what language will he express himself? That will entirely depend on where and by whom he is reared. He has it in him to speak a hundred different languages. A friend of mine has brought up an Italian child who was rescued as a baby from the earthquake of Messina. That child speaks English like a native. Had there been no earthquake she would now be speaking a Sicilian patois. Had she been adopted by a Russian, she would be speaking Russian; by a Frenchman, French; by a Chinaman, Chinese; by a Negro,

a Negro dialect. In brief, she had a capacity for learning any language or dialect that happened to be spoken by those who surrounded her. And so has every normal child. Her forefathers may have been of pure Sicilian blood (if there is such a thing) for countless generations; but they transmitted to her no special aptitude for their own language. She may not have had a drop of English blood in her veins. But she learnt English in English surroundings as easily as she would have learnt her mother's tongue in Sicilian surroundings. What was transmitted to her—along what line or lines of descent I cannot say—was her racial inheritance, including a general capacity for learning to talk. And as every language and every sub-language—patois, dialect, or even prominent accent—has behind it a particular way of thinking and feeling, a particular outlook on life, we may safely conjecture that every child has it in him at birth to adapt himself to as many ways of thinking and feeling and to adopt as many outlooks on life as there are languages, and sub-languages, in this world of ours.

When the baby emerges from infancy he will have to be educated. Now all systems of education, however much they may differ in other ways, have one thing in common. They take for granted that any child of normal ability can, if reasonably industrious, learn any subject that

is suitable for his tender years. It does not follow, as some educationists seem to think, that every child ought to learn every conceivable subject. Nor does it follow that the common practice of forcing on children subjects for which they have no natural inclination is justified. Still the fact that children can, under compulsion, learn subjects in which they take no interest and can see but little meaning, shows that even the average child has in him large reserves of mental capacity, and that the assumption which underlies all our educational systems is to that extent well grounded. Nor does the fact that many children, when they leave school, have lost all their interest in mental work and much of their power of utilizing their latent capacity, prove anything except that a cramping and sterilizing environment can do much in the way of robbing a child of his birthright. To argue from what a child is when education has victimized him to what he was at birth is in all probability to go very far astray.

As the child grows up, the choice of a vocation will devolve upon his parents or guardians. What will they do? Will they examine his pedigree in order to see for what calling his inherited tendencies have specially fitted him? No, they will look to his environment, past and present, rather than to his lineage. They will look to their own means, to the way in which

he has been educated, to the opportunities for continuing his education, to the possibilities of his being apprenticed to a trade, to the local demand for labour, and other such matters, and they will make their choice for him by reference to these considerations, unless indeed he has some strongly pronounced inclination of which they approve and which they are in a position to gratify. They will take for granted that if he is of average ability and is reasonably industrious, he will be able, sooner or later, to become proficient at any craft, or trade, or profession for which his circumstances, including his education, past and prospective, have fitted him. They will take for granted that he has it in him to make himself at home in a multitude of different callings, and that it must in the main be left to circumstances to determine which of these he is to adopt. It is true that aptitudes vary. We cannot all do all things equally well. There is no one who is not better fitted for some pursuits than for others. But there is no one who cannot, if he chooses, make himself tolerably proficient at any one of a large number of different pursuits. And if the average adolescent, in spite of the cramping pressure to which he has, almost inevitably, been subjected, has it in him to earn his livelihood in so many different ways, does it not follow that his inherent adaptability is practically unlimited—in other words, that he

has boundless reserves of potentiality to draw upon? Since the present war began our army has expanded to ten times its previous strength. How has this been done? By men going into it out of a hundred different callings and learning what was a new trade for each of them, the trade of war. And, though some of these apprentices were doubtless apter pupils than others, so well has the average Englishman, of whatever class or calling, learnt this new trade, that our vast army is now as efficient as it is resolute and brave. What better proof could be given of the inherent versatility of human nature, of the infinite resourcefulness of the soul?

Here, then, lineal heredity counts for very little, whereas racial heredity, controlled and guided by environment, counts for nearly everything and seems to have an unlimited range. But let us test the value of the conclusion which we have reached, by making an imaginative experiment. Let us arrange for a hundred babies—German, if you will—to be born and reared in ten foreign countries, ten in each—say in England, France, Russia, Spain, Italy, Holland, Sweden, the United States, the Argentine, and Brazil. Let us divide the inhabitants of each of these ten countries into ten social grades—landowners, peasants, merchants, shopkeepers, clerks, manufacturers, artisans, civil servants, professional men, ministers of religion. And let

us arrange in each country for the babies to be brought up in these ten social grades, one in each. Above all, let us arrange, in each case, for German influences to be excluded from the baby's life, if not from the day of its birth then from as near to that date as possible. Let us then look forward some twenty or thirty years. What will have happened? Can anyone doubt that a large majority of the German babies will have become loyal citizens of their adopted countries, and respectable members of their respective social grades? Some failures there will have been among them. But probably not a higher percentage than if they had belonged by birth to the various countries which I have specified and been born into the social grades in which I have placed them. The chances are that each of them will have accepted the "Kultur" of his particular country [1] and (whether nominally or really) the religion of his particular foster-parents, and will have adopted the prejudices and general outlook on life of his particular social grade.

[1] Were the career of one of these German babies to become the theme of a story by one of our "heredity" novelists, we should probably be told that when the baby became an adolescent he began to be tormented with apparently unaccountable cravings for *Sauerkraut* and lager beer. I do not think that those cravings would be felt. I think that from first to last the transplanted German, provided that he got enough to eat and drink, would be quite content with the food and drink of his adopted country.

Consider what this means. Each of the babies had it in him to play a hundred different parts—the part of an English squire, of a French artisan, of a Russian peasant, of an American manufacturer, of a Dutch merchant, of an Italian priest, of a Swedish official, and so on. What vast potential resources he must have had at his disposal! Which particular part he had to play was decided by "chance." But potentially he was equal to all the parts and to as many more as we might choose to assign to him. His adaptability in fine reflected that of the whole human race, and the range of his latent capacity had no limits.

In this respect, if in no other, man stands apart from all other living things. Even his friend and companion, the dog, who probably comes next to him in mental and moral development, is separated from him as regards adaptability by an impassable abyss. It is true that the dog family can play a great variety of parts. But this has been made possible, as anyone can see at a glance, only by very strict physical differentiation. Hence the supreme importance of breeding from the dog-fancier's point of view. Vocation, among dogs, is handed down from father to son, not as a tradition but as a tendency "in the blood." No amount of training could convert a Newfoundland puppy into a sheep-dog or enable a bulldog to course hares. With

man it is entirely different. In spite of the distinctions of colour, with all that they imply, and in spite of a host of minor variations in face and figure, there is but one dominant human type. And that one type, besides being able to adapt itself to all climates and to a vast range of material conditions, can take up an unlimited number of different interests and pursuits. The average baby has it in him, as we have seen, to speak a hundred languages, to belong to a hundred nations, to learn a hundred trades and professions, to play a hundred parts in life.

And the infinitude of the racial inheritance which the average baby brings with him into the world is of many dimensions. The religious phenomenon known as "conversion," with the sudden transition which it sometimes effects from the very worst in a man to the very best; the winning of V.C.'s and other rewards of courage and self-sacrifice by criminals and other "detrimentals" on the field of battle; the upsurging, in moments of supreme crisis, of heroism and self-devotion from unsuspected abysses in some seemingly commonplace soul; the sudden melting of a hardened heart in the sunshine of sympathy and kindness; the transforming influence of the passion of personal love on a man's whole attitude towards life,—these and other phenomena of a kindred nature, which, though necessarily rare (for only exceptional combinations of circum-

stances can produce them), are not therefore to be regarded as abnormal, seem to show that the unfathomed depths of man's racial nature are as illimitable as its lateral range. "It is a wonder," writes one of our war correspondents, "that never palls but is always new: the spirit which these men of ours possess from no matter what corner of the Empire they may have come. One wonders where the grumblers, the cowards, the mean people whom one thought one met in ordinary life have gone. They are not here. Or, if they are, they are uplifted and transfigured. They doubtless, many of them, could not express it, but some wind has blown upon them, some sense of comradeship and brotherhood inspires them, something has made true soldiers and gallant men of them all." Such a transformation as is described in this passage is inexplicable except on the assumption that there are immense reserves of spiritual vitality in the soul of the "plain average man," and that though for the most part these forces lie dormant and undreamed of, they can awake and energize when some great crisis makes its mute appeal to the man's highest self.

What is the explanation of this fundamental paradox? Why is it that whereas on the physical plane our racial inheritance seems to be strictly limited, on the higher levels of our being infinitude seems to be of its very essence? The answer to

this question may be given in a single word: *Consciousness.* What consciousness is, how we have acquired it, into what factors it admits of being analysed, we cannot say.[1] What we can say is, that though foreshadowings and "weak beginnings" of it are to be found below the level of human life, consciousness is a distinctively human endowment, or rather it is *the* distinctively human endowment, the feature which, more than any other, differentiates us from all other living things and is therefore characteristic of man as man. Now consciousness, by enabling man to look before and after, and also to look all round an ever-widening horizon, throws open to him all the resources of the universe, and in doing so reveals to him—*in posse*, if not *in esse* —corresponding resources in himself. In other words, it raises, or tends to raise, "to infinity" all his powers and tendencies which are not merely physical. Thus it transforms instinct into reason, blind purpose into self-determining will, feeling into fellow-feeling, perception into imagination, sensuous enjoyment into the quest of ideal beauty, carnal desire into spiritual love, communal devotion into the "enthusiasm of

[1] We may, if we please, define consciousness as the self-awareness of the soul, or, again, as the self-awareness of life. But no definition can enable us to fathom its fundamental mystery. If we would know what consciousness is, we must turn for instruction to consciousness itself, and open our hearts and minds to its dawning light.

humanity," the instinct of self-preservation into the thirst for "eternal life."

In the awakening of consciousness life begins to be aware of its own limitless possibilities. Before consciousness awakes, the current of life flows, blindly and instinctively, in a narrow channel between containing walls which it may never overpass. As consciousness awakes the channel begins to widen, and a tidal wave flows up it fraught with

"Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea."

That message from the sea is the revelation of life to life, of self to self. Can we wonder that the racial inheritance of the human soul has no limit when consciousness, which is its differential feature, is the very principle of infinitude in man's life?

In respect, then, of its racial inheritance the individual soul either is in itself a reservoir of unlimited potentialities, or else has such a reservoir at its command. What part does lineal heredity play in its development? We have seen that on the physical plane our racial heritage is far larger and far more significant than our lineal heritage, the possession of eyes, for example, being of far more consequence than the particular colour of the eyes, the possession of a mouth than the particular shape of the mouth, and so on. Will it not be the same on the higher levels

of human life? Will not the ratio between the two heritages be at least maintained? So one instinctively argues. But we shall presently find it necessary to look at the matter from a different point of view. To speak of a ratio between two finite or quasi-finite quantities is permissible. But when one of the quantities is infinite and the other unknown, the relation between the two is scarcely one of ratio, in the accepted sense of that word.

But let us for the moment assume that the arithmetical or quasi-arithmetical point of view holds good. Let us assume that our lineal heritage is a more or less calculable quantity, and let us try to determine its dimensions. We shall find that, far from being the preponderant element in human nature which it is sometimes supposed to be, it is an elusive, a negligible, and even a vanishing quantity. We shall find that by far the larger part of what we attribute to lineal heredity may just as plausibly, and indeed with better reason, be attributed to environment —in other words, to racial heredity being allowed to come into play.

Let us consider some concrete cases.

A, who is the child of disreputable parents, grows up a ne'er-do-weel. B, who is the child of respectable parents, grows up a respectable citizen. Will it be seriously contended that A inherits his disreputableness and B his respecta-

bility from their respective parents? Is it not more than probable that, had A and B exchanged homes at birth, B would have become the ne'er-do-weel and A the respectable citizen? From birth to maturity A has been exposed to the influence of a bad, B of a good environment. Considering how impressionable and imitative children are, one may surely argue that the vital difference in the respective environments of the two boys is sufficient to account for the divergence of their respective paths in life.

C, allowed from his earliest days to run wild in a disorderly slum, acquires the language of the gutter, and uses it with vigour and effect. Will it be seriously contended that he inherited a "foul mouth" from his parents? Is it not practically certain that if a princeling had been exposed at the same tender age to the same influences he too would have become a master of oaths and obscenities?

D, the son of drunken parents, takes to drink at an early age. Was he born into the world with a latent craving for alcohol? He may have inherited from his parents some slight infirmity of will. But in the main his downfall must surely be attributed to his unfortunate environment. His parents, in their moments of maudlin affection, may well have initiated him into their own ways. In any case he spent the most impressionable years of his life in a demora-

lizing atmosphere; and a bad example was habitually set him by those whom he was naturally prone to imitate.

E, having been persistently bullied by his parents and school-teachers, takes to bullying his younger brothers and smaller schoolfellows. Is there a strain of bullying in his blood? We cannot say. What we can say is that in all probability he, like D, succumbed to the influences of a demoralizing atmosphere, and imitated those whom he naturally made his models.

These are some of the failures in life. As it is with the failures so it is with the successes. The respectable son of respectable parents has been taught from his earliest days to idealize respectability. The prosperous son of prosperous parents has always been accustomed to regard prosperity as his birthright. The refined and cultivated son of refined and cultivated parents has grown up in an atmosphere of refinement and culture. The musical son of musical parents, the artistic son of artistic parents—each of these owes something to inherited temperament, but he owes at least as much—and probably more—to the subtly plastic influences, musical and artistic, which began to act upon him while he was still in his mother's arms.

I could add to such cases indefinitely. Whenever I hear it said that such and such a disposition or such and such a trait is inherited from

parents or ancestors, I ask myself whether an alliance between racial heredity and environment will not adequately account for the given phenomenon, and I almost invariably find that it seems to do so. I ask the same question—let me say in passing—and am able to give the same answer when I am told by Mr. H. Chamberlain and others that national characteristics—the independence and reserve of the Englishman, the "canniness" of the Scot, the lawlessness of the Irishman, the pride of the Spaniard, the arrogance and servility of the German—are "in the blood" of the several peoples, for I find that in every case the explanation of the predominance of the given trait seems to be historical rather than racial (in the narrow sense of the word).

But if familiar causes suffice to account for a given phenomenon, why should we try to account for it on grounds which are at best dubious and insecure? We know what we are talking about when we say that children are impressionable and imitative. We do not know what we are talking about when we say that mental and moral qualities are "in the blood." Let us at least exhaust the possibilities of the known before we invoke the aid of the unknown.

How comes it, then, that the fantastic belief in lineal heredity as the predominant factor in the formation of mentality and character prevails

so widely ? Partly, I think, because the orthodox doctrine of the supernatural origin of the individual soul is falling into disrepute, and physiology seems to a certain type of mind to provide the only alternative to it. But chiefly, I think, for two reasons, each of which is based on an interpretation of facts which really point to a widely different conclusion. We believe in the constraining force of lineal heredity because the infinite variety of human development and the infinite diversity—or apparent diversity—of human gifts and endowments leads us to concentrate our attention on the differential elements in human nature and to lose sight of the common elements. And we believe in it because " pure breeding," whether in a family, a tribe, a people, or a class, does in each case undoubtedly tend to preserve a particular type of character and a particular outlook on life.

Let us first consider the former reason. The infinite variety of human life, as it manifests itself in history or as it unfolds itself, in all its length and breadth, before our eyes—the fact that there seem to be innumerable types of human beings, that in many cases each human being seems to be a type in himself—has led careless observers to conclude that lineal heredity dominates human nature on all its higher planes. Two men living in adjoining houses may have so little in common, except on the physical and mental

planes, that they seem to belong to entirely different species. A has moral and spiritual qualities which are not merely lacking but are actually inverted in B. What then? Is there no such thing as human nature? If two trees, similar in many respects, bore edible and poisonous fruit respectively, we should say that they belonged to different species. Is it not the same with men? If B hates where A loves, if B lies where A speaks the truth, if B is self-centred where A is self-forgetful, if B is self-indulgent where A is self-restrained, and so on, do not A and B belong to different species of the genus Man? If this is so, how are we to account for the disruption of the human race into so many species? If it is not so, how are we to account for the facts?

"To those who chattered Rousseau," says Dr. Hayward, "Herbart flung the question, 'What is the nature of Man?'" The naturalists who interest themselves in psychology are divided, as we have seen, into great schools, the school of "Nature" and the school of "Nurture." These schools have one doctrine in common—namely, that there is no such thing as human nature, in the Herbartian sense of the phrase, no such thing as the "true manhood" of which Froebel dreamed, no such thing as a central, magisterial, all-controlling, all-explaining stream of tendency in human nature, which is waiting

to assert itself in every man and which is therefore characteristic of man as man. But their interpretations of the fact on which they base this negative conclusion—the bewildering diversity of human development—are diametrically opposed to, and may perhaps be held to cancel, one another. The "Nature" school attribute that diversity to the unscientific intermixture of the different "strains" of Humanity. The "Nurture" school attribute it to the infinite variety and complexity of man's environment, which causes a different inscription, so to speak, to be written by the "moving finger" of Fate on the "neutral clean sheet" of each individual soul. There is a third interpretation which is, I think, at once less fantastic and less fatalistic than either of these, and more in keeping with the relevant facts. That the variety of man's life reflects the variety of his environment may be freely admitted. But to predicate activity of man's environment and passivity of man himself, alone among living beings, is surely to invert the true order of things. The oak-tree is in the acorn; and in the absence of convincing proof to the contrary, I must believe that whatever a man may become, in response to the influences that are brought to bear on him, that he has it in him to be. If, then, the variety of man's life reflects the variety of his environment, the reason is that in response to the ever-

varying stimulus of his environment man develops himself in ten thousand different directions; and the reasonwhy he is able to do this is that he has inexhaustible reserves of potentiality to draw upon—or, in other words, that his racial, as opposed to his lineal, inheritance has no limits.

But here we must distinguish between the individual and the race. For man as man the environment is world-wide and infinitely varied. For this or that man the immediately available environment is, as a rule, strictly limited and comparatively monotonous. It is true that beyond the immediately available environment there is room for indefinite advance and expansion. A farm labourer, for example, may also be a member of the Catholic Church, and a citizen of the United Kingdom; and he may have it in him to react to the stimulus of each of these environing communities. But the pressure of what I have called the immediately available environment—the material conditions of a man's life, the restrictions imposed on him by his upbringing, the limiting influences inherent in his calling and his social grade, and the like—is at all times strong, and, as the years go by, may well acquire irresistible strength. Potentially, however, this man or that man and man as man may almost be said to coincide. The contrast between the greatness of the individual's ideal

destiny and the littleness of his actual destiny is indeed the supreme tragedy of man's life.

Yet in that supreme tragedy man holds the title-deeds of his great inheritance. Because the environment of man as man is world-wide and infinitely varied, and the environment of this or that man is by comparison narrow and monotonous, there is room and to spare for each individual environment to have a distinctive character of its own which reflects itself in the character of the individual who responds to it. And the inference to be drawn from this fact is not that there are innumerable species of the genus Man, but that man as man has it in him to respond and adapt himself to any and every environment. In other words, if each individual in turn can surround himself with a little world of his own by reference to which his individuality is developed and defined, the reason is that, on the one hand, as A or B or C, he is strictly limited by material and quasi-material conditions, and, on the other hand, as a human being, he has the whole Universe at his command; and the reason why, as a human being, he has the whole Universe at his command, is that its infinitude reflects itself in his—reflects itself in the limitless reserves of potentiality which constitute his racial inheritance, and which make it possible for him to respond to every pressure and react to every stimulus. Thus the bewildering diversity of

human development, which has generated the belief in the omnipotence of lineal heredity, in reality bears witness to man's infinite adaptability; and infinite adaptability, being potentially common to all men, is inherited by a man not from his lineal ancestors, but from the whole human race.

And this is not all. It is not merely because he is infinitely adaptable that man is able to develop himself in so many different directions, but because, as a conscious being, he can react upon and even control his environment, and through his control of it can bring an infinite variety of transforming influences to bear upon himself. We have seen that consciousness is the principle of infinitude in man's life, that it raises to infinity all his higher powers and faculties, changing, for example, instinct into reason, perception into imagination, blind purpose into self-determining will, and so on. By raising his powers and faculties to infinity, consciousness extends his environment, potentially if not actually, to the uttermost limits of the Universe. For we mean by a man's environment so much of the Universe as he is able to react to; and as man's perceptive, reflective, and volitional faculties expand, the sphere of his reactivity expands proportionately until he finds himself the centre of an almost illimitable world. Or we may, if we please, invert the order of causation

and say that, by indefinitely expanding his environment, consciousness raises to infinity man's powers and faculties. For so greatly does the world in which he lives expand in the dawning light of consciousness that he finds himself compelled in self-defence to study the laws of his ever-widening environment, to realize its latent possibilities, to make his choice, again and again, among its resources. In his attempt to study its laws, instinct gradually transforms itself into reason. In his attempt to realize its latent possibilities, perception transforms itself into imagination. In his attempt to choose among its resources, blind purpose transforms itself into self-determining will. As these characteristically human faculties unfold themselves, it becomes possible for a man not merely to react to his environment, but to react upon it, to master it in some measure, to make experiments with it, to modify it in many ways, to make it subservient to his needs, to mould it to his desires, to open his heart to some of its influences, to harden his heart against others, to expand it till it embraces all the stars of heaven, to narrow it till it shrinks to the dimensions of a miser's garret.[1]

[1] With the power of modifying and even transforming one's own environment comes the power of affecting, in greater or less degree, the environment of others. Each of us, as he goes through life, is the centre of an ever-moving circle of disturbance. In some cases the circle is wide; in

In reacting on his environment, man reacts, through his environment, on his own development. And his capacity for so reacting is unlimited. The response of a plant or an animal to environment is blind, instinctive, and involuntary. The response of man, at any rate on the higher levels of his being, is, in varying degrees, conscious, intelligent, and deliberate. The difference between the two responses is the difference between what is finite and what is infinite. The communal devotion of ants or bees is mechanically perfect, and varies nothing from ant to ant or from bee to bee; but it is what it is—"finished and finite"—and cannot possibly become anything else. The communal devotion of human beings varies from man to man and never attains to perfection, which is an ideal, not an accomplished fact; but it is capable of soaring to the sublimest height of patriotism or widening out into the "enthusiasm of humanity." And it owes its range and its variety to the transforming influence of consciousness. This example is typical. Consciousness, the most distinctively human of all man's endowments, is the ultimate

others—the majority—it is comparatively narrow; but it is always wide enough to involve many lives besides one's own. In a very real sense each of us *is* his brother's keeper. His own bearing in life inevitably reacts—for good or for evil—upon the lives of others, affecting some profoundly, others only slightly, but touching many lives and influencing in some degree all that it touches.

source of that bewildering diversity of human development which is apt to blind our eyes to the fundamental unity of our higher nature—that diversity which the "Nurture" school of psychologists try to account for by reference to the tyranny of environment, and the "Nature" school by reference to the tyranny of "blood." That bewildering diversity would not be possible if each of us, as his racial birthright, had not unlimited reserves of potentiality to draw upon. Still less would it be possible if the dawning light of consciousness did not reveal to us, little by little, our inward possibilities and outward resources, and so stimulate us, each in his own way and his own degree, to enter into possession of our inheritance.

In conclusion. The profound differences between man and man which suggest to some minds that the human race has broken up, under the influence of haphazard breeding, into a multitude of species, and that lineal heredity is therefore the main factor in man's development, and the supreme arbiter of his destiny, really point to a diametrically opposite conclusion. The differences between man and man are caused by human nature—the nature of man as man—striving to realize its vast potentialities, in response to the stimulus of an environment which for each of us is ideally infinite, but actually limited by material conditions and other

restrictive influences, and also perpetually reacted upon and modified by the man himself and his fellow-men. In other words, "the many" are generated by the self-realisation of "the One"; and "the One"—the fundamental unity and totality of human nature—is at the heart of each individual man.

I have said that another reason why the fatalistic belief in the force of heredity prevails so widely is that pure breeding, whether in a family, a tribe, a nation, a class, or a caste, does undoubtedly safeguard and tend to perpetuate the tradition that dominates the particular environment into which the individual is born. There is a widespread prejudice against marrying into another nation than one's own. There is a still stronger prejudice against marrying into a lower social grade. And the prejudice against marrying into another coloured race is so strong that those who offend against it, especially if they belong to the politically dominant race, are regarded as social outcasts and shunned by their relations and friends. These prejudices are by no means unreasonable. It not unfrequently happens that the children of "mixed marriages" have the failings of both breeds and the virtues of neither. But why? Not because their blood is impure, but because they are born into two distinct traditions, and that those tra-

ditions mix badly, if they do not actually refuse to mix. By a tradition I mean the way of looking at life and dealing with life which has grown up among and is now characteristic of a particular race, or a particular community, or a particular class, or even a particular family. Pure breeding ensures the maintenance of such a tradition; and those who are in the tradition and value it are right to object to marrying into a tradition which is antagonistic to or even seriously divergent from their own. But they are wrong to give as their reason for objecting to it that they do not wish to contaminate their blood. What they really mean is that they do not wish to undermine or otherwise impair the tradition in which they have been reared and to which they cling. The notation in which we express ourselves in such cases needs to be revised. When we say that a man comes of a good stock or has good blood in his veins, we mean that he is born into and brought up in a good tradition. When we say that he is well-bred, we mean that, owing to the accident of his birth, he has been, or at least might have been, well brought up. We attribute to "nature" what is really due to "nurture." I have elsewhere referred to the case of the hybrid Eurasian and the pure-bred Jew of the Pale; and as what I said then still seems to me to hold good, I may perhaps be allowed to quote my own words:

"It is sometimes said that the Eurasian in Hindostan has the faults of both the races from which he springs. In reality he has the faults of two widely dissimilar environments. For he is in the unhappy position of having a leg in each of two dissevered worlds. If he could be brought up from his birth either as an Englishman or as a Hindoo, all might be well with him. But it is his fate to be brought up both as an Englishman and as a Hindoo, and he is therefore perpetually torn asunder between two great and ancient civilizations which have so long been kept apart that they now refuse to blend. . . ." "The case of the Jew is interesting and to the point. Here, at any rate 'within the Pale,' purity of blood has been strictly maintained, and a social life, based on Pharisaic legalism, has continued unchanged from the time of the Dispersal to the present day. Does it follow that legalism is in the blood of the modern Jew? By no means. What has happened is that the purity of his blood has given him a homogeneous and practically unvarying environment, to the full force of which each individual member of the race is exposed from the moment of his birth. Where there are no marriages, and therefore little or no social intercourse, with outsiders, the same conception of life, the same scheme of life, the same culture, the same civilization, are handed down from generation to genera-

tion, and the pressure of their influence on the individual is well-nigh irresistible. But let the Jew emerge from the Pale, and intermarry with the Gentile, and he speedily shuffles off the oppressive burden of the Law." [1]

If these things are so; if the tragedy of the Eurasian is caused, not by two widely different strains of blood meeting in his veins, but by two widely different civilizations meeting in his life; if the legalism of the pure-bred Jew has come down to him as a tradition, and only as a tradition —fifteen centuries of strict in-breeding having apparently failed to infuse a single atom of it into his blood; if (to take another case) in Paraguay, at the present day, "thanks to a homogeneous environment, we have remarkable homogeneity of character co-existing with almost unparalleled hybridity of race"—can we resist the inference that the response of human nature —the generic nature of man—to the stimulus of environment is the main factor in the formation of character, and that breeding only counts because, and so far as, it serves to guide and control the formative influences of environment?

[1] *In Defence of What Might Be*, pp. 364–6.

CHAPTER IV

THE THEORY OF STRAIN

From the position which I reached at the end of the last chapter I pass on to the conclusion that the theory of "strain," as expounded by Professor Bateson and other naturalists, though it may hold good in an appreciable degree of man's physique, does not hold good of his character. The psychological and sociological implications of the theory of strain are so important that the question of its applicability to the higher levels of human nature deserves the most careful consideration. In his Address to the British Association at Melbourne, Professor Bateson supports his thesis that "of the overwhelmingly greater significance of 'nature' (in human life) there is no longer any possibility of doubt" by an appeal to "the universal experience of the breeder, whether of plants or animals, that strain is absolutely essential, that though bad conditions may easily enough spoil a good strain, yet that under the best of conditions a bad strain will never give a fine result." This argument

begs the question which is in dispute. To argue from the facts of plant and animal life to the possibilities of human life is permissible—on two conditions. The thinker must satisfy himself that, as his argument develops, the analogy between the two kinds of life continues to hold good. And he must decline to accept the consequent conclusions until they have been verified in greater or less degree, by observation or experiment, or both. Neither of these conditions has been fulfilled by Professor Bateson. He assumes at the outset that the analogy between the two kinds of life is absolute and final; that it virtually amounts to identity; in other words, that man is an animal and nothing more. And he makes no attempt to verify his conclusion. The question which is really in dispute is this: Does the biological theory of "strain" apply to the higher or more spiritual levels of human nature? If it does, the "universal experience of the breeder" may fairly be appealed to. But until we have satisfied ourselves that it does—until we have satisfied ourselves, for example, that the "lower orders" are, in respect of mentality and character, of an inferior strain to the "upper classes"—the experience of the breeder counts for nothing in this controversy, and Professor Bateson's argument must be ruled out of court.

In order to make his point of view clear Pro-

fessor Bateson reviews and criticizes a passage in my book *What is and What Might Be*.[1] In order to make my point of view clear, I will quote his criticism and then reply to it:

"Having witnessed the success of a great teacher in helping unpromising peasant children to develop their natural powers, he (the author of *What is and What Might Be*) gives us the following botanical parallel. Assuming that the wild bullace is the origin of domesticated plums, he tells us that by cultivation the bullace can no doubt be improved so as to become a better bullace, but by no means can the bullace be made to bear plums. All this is sound biology; but translating these facts into the human analogy, he declares that the work of the successful teacher shows that with man the facts are otherwise,

[1] Professor Bateson speaks of my book as "charming though pathetic." I am glad that it charmed so competent a judge. But why does he call it pathetic? Does he think that I am one of the "educationists" whom "faith, not evidence, . . . encourages to hope so greatly in the ameliorating conditions of life"? If he does, let me assure him that, on the contrary, it is evidence, not (mere) faith, which has made me an optimist as regards the efficacy of "nurture" in general and education in particular. For many years, if I did not actually believe, I certainly took for granted, that the upper classes were of a superior "strain" to the lower, and I had therefore but little faith in the transforming influence of education. But experience, in "Egeria's" and other schools, convinced me, late in life, that my arrogant assumption was a mere superstition, and that the lower classes were as well able to respond to the stimulus of a vivifying education as the upper.

and that the *average* rustic child, whose normal ideal is 'bullacehood,' can become the rare exception, developing to a stage corresponding with that of the plum. But the naturalist knows exactly where the parallel is at fault. For . . . the bullace is breeding approximately true, whereas the human crop, like jute and various cottons, is in a state of polymorphic mixture. The population of many English villages may be compared with the crop which would result from sowing a bushel of kernels gathered mostly from the hedges with an occasional few from the orchard. If anyone asks how there are any plum-kernels in the sample at all, he may find the answer perhaps in spontaneous variation, but more probably in the appearance of a long hidden recession. For the want of that genetic variation, consisting probably, as I have argued, in loss of inhibiting factors, by which the plum arose from the wild form, neither food, nor education, nor hygiene can in any way atone. Many wild plants are half-starved through competition, and transferred to garden soil they grow much bigger; so good conditions might certainly enable the bullace population to develop beyond the stunted physical and mental status they commonly attain, but plums they can never be." What does the last sentence in this paragraph mean? Is Professor Bateson denying my facts, or is he merely denying the possibility of human

bullaces being transformed into human plums? I think he is denying my facts. Had I said that *some* of the Utopian bullaces developed into plums, and had I attributed this to "Egeria's" transforming influence, Professor Bateson's explanation of what happened would certainly have been worth considering. But I said then, and I say now with equal emphasis, that before they left "Egeria's" school, all or nearly all the Utopian bullaces had become plums; in other words, that the average child had developed certain plum-like qualities which I enumerated in my book—namely, "activity, versatility, imaginative sympathy, a large and free outlook, self-forgetfulness, charm of manner, joy of heart." [1] When I say this I am stating what I believe to be a fact. Now a fact, or rather the report of a fact, must either be accepted or rejected. If it is accepted, the logical consequences of accepting it must also be accepted. If it is rejected, the rejection must be based on one (or both) of two grounds. The first is that the reporter either misread the evidence of his senses, or, if he spoke from hearsay, was misinformed. The second is that the reported fact is intrinsically quite incredible. Professor Bateson cannot from his owne xperience deny the fact that I have reported, for he never visited "Egeria's"

[1] That these are plum-like qualities will, I think, be generally admitted.

school. But because his theories fail to account for the fact, he rejects it off-hand, though it is *not* intrinsically incredible, on purely *a priori* grounds. Such a proceeding is unworthy of a scientific mind. I have always understood that when a fact collides with a theory, it is the latter, not the former, that goes to the wall. A witty Frenchman has made fun of the scientists who will not allow that any phenomenon can take place which official science has not authorized Nature to produce. Professor Bateson goes further than this. For he will not allow that human nature can bear any fruit which his biological theories, *based on the study of plants and animals only*, have not authorized it to bear. In taking up this attitude he leans too heavily on the argument from analogy. It is useless for him to tell me that because no amount of culture can enable a bullace-tree to bear plums, therefore the average Utopian child could not have developed the plum-like qualities with which I credited him. I say that he did develop those qualities, and that judicious and sympathetic culture enabled him to do so.

But perhaps Professor Bateson is merely denying in general terms that human bullaces can be transformed into human plums. If so, he is probably right. But if he is, and if my facts hold good, his theory of "strain," so far as it applies to human beings, goes to the wall. I

am grateful to Professor Bateson for having compelled me to re-read the passage which he criticized. For I see now that there is a serious flaw in my argument, a flaw which escaped my notice when I composed the passage. I assumed that the rustic inhabitants of Utopia were a "bullace population"; in other words, that they belonged for the most part to an inferior "strain." Whether I really believed this when I wrote my book I cannot say for certain. It is possible that a superstition of which I had but recently, under "Egeria's" influence, begun to divest myself, still lingered in my mind—the superstition that the "lower orders" are by birth and breeding our inferiors in mentality and character. In any case, I wrote as if I was still the victim of that superstition; and I therefore claimed by implication that "Egeria" had wrought a miracle. Professor Bateson might have reminded me that, as miracles do not happen, if "Egeria's" pupils really reached the plum level, they must have been plums *in posse* from their earliest days. But instead of doing this he assumed, with me, that the bulk of the Utopian children belonged to the bullace breed, and argued from this that they could not and did not develop into plums. My answer to this argument—an answer which I will repeat as often as it is called for—is that plums those children certainly were, and plums of a very high quality,

—that the average Utopian child was in fact a better specimen of plumhood than the average product of what we call "good breeding" and "gentle birth." And I can now draw for myself the inference from my own premises which Professor Bateson might have drawn for me (if only to reject it, when drawn)—that neither mentally nor morally are the lower classes inferior *at birth* to the upper; that the average peasant in particular is not a bullace, but a plum—a plum which, owing to the combined influences of poor soil, unfavourable climate, and unskilful culture, has missed its high destiny and fallen below the normal level of plum growth.

How completely Professor Bateson, as an interpreter of human nature, is obsessed by the biological theory of "strain" is shown by the following passages in his Melbourne Address: "Modern statesmanship aims rightly at helping those who have got sown as wildings to come into their proper class; but let not anyone suppose such a policy democratic in its ultimate effects, for no course of action can be more effective in strengthening the upper classes, while weakening the lower." [1] . . . . "In all practical schemes for social reform the congenital

[1] The theory which Professor Bateson has expounded must surely have originated in Germany. One can imagine with what gusto the Hohenzollerns and the Prussian Junkers would lay its flattering unction to their souls. One might

diversity, the essential polymorphism of all civilized communities must be recognized as a fundamental fact, and reformers should rather direct their efforts to facilitating and rectifying class distinctions, than to any futile attempt to abolish them. . . . The instability of society is due, not to inequality, which is inherent and congenital, but to the fact that in periods of rapid change like the present convection currents are set up such that the elements of the strata get intermixed and the apparent stratification corresponds only roughly with the genetic."

These passages set one thinking. When one remembers by what methods the "upper classes" in this and other countries, and in this and other ages, have gained the upper hand, how largely they have owed their ascendancy to force or to fraud or to a judicious mixture of force and fraud, how much of their reputed ability has been sheer unscrupulousness, how much of their reputed force of character has been ruthless self-assertion—one begins to wonder what are the qualities, superiority in which differentiates the "high-born" aristocracy from the "low-born" populace. Are they the qualities which Christ pronounced blessed in the Sermon on

even conjecture that the professor who elaborated it, if of "bullace" origin, was raised to the "plum" level by royal mandate and made a "von" in recognition of his newly-acquired superior strain.

the Mount? I doubt it. As I turn the pages of history I find that again and again the ungodly flourished like a green bay-tree—flourished so triumphantly that he was able to bequeath his ill-gotten prosperity to the third and fourth, and even to the tenth, generation of his descendants. In such a case did the successful scoundrel bequeath his character as well as his position and wealth? According to Professor Bateson he must have done so. But, if he did, there is surely a flaw in his descendants' title to social and political ascendancy.

Professor Bateson has raised an interesting and difficult question. Will he help us to answer it? Are his "upper classes" an aristocracy of physique, of intellect, of morals, of spirituality? That they are "inherently and congenitally" superior in all four directions is a proposition which those who are well acquainted with both classes will laugh to scorn, and which even Professor Bateson will scarcely have the hardihood to maintain. Were the robber knights of the Rhine, are the arrogant barons of East Prussia and the Baltic Provinces "high-born"? Are the Franciscan brothers and sisters, whose ideal of life has always been diametrically opposed to that of knight or baron, "low-born"? The pedigree of a dog or a horse is recorded in certain unmistakable features. In what features, inward or outward, does Nature record the pedigree of the

"high-born" or the "low-born" man? This is a point on which Professor Bateson would do well to enlighten us, but on which he prefers to keep silence.

Let us try to answer the question which he has left unanswered. He seems to take for granted that the upper classes in this country—the nobility, gentry, and professional men, let us say—are mostly plums, and that the lower classes—the peasants, miners, and artisans, let us say—are mostly bullaces. Wherein, then, do the upper classes show their inherent and congenital superiority to the lower? That they are richer, better educated, and have more social and political influence goes without saying. But in the first place a man may be rich, well-educated, and influential, and yet be a base-souled villain; and in the second place riches, education, and social and political influence belong to a man's environment rather than to his blood. That they are of superior physique may perhaps be admitted, though even in this respect the difference between the two classes at birth is comparatively small, the physical superiority of the average adult specimen of the upper classes being largely due to healthier surroundings and better food. That they are superior in mental power is disputable, to say the least. The adult peasant is no doubt less cultured and less intellectual than the adult "gentleman"; but he has been

exposed from his birth, both at home and in school, to much less favourable educational influences, and it is to this rather than to any inherited inferiority that his short-comings, cultural and intellectual, are probably due. What the inherent and congenital mentality of the lower classes really is, or how it compares with that of the upper classes, we do not know. What we do know is that the peasant, the miner, and the artisan are born into a cramping and depressing environment, the product of social and economic causes, from which they cannot easily escape and in which it is as difficult for their mental powers to unfold as for a tree to thrive in an exposed situation or a poor soil. This fact invites imaginative conjecture as to what might be or might have been. The psychology of Gray's *Elegy*, which wisely limits itself to "perhaps" and "may," is, I believe, absolutely sound:

> Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
> Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
> Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd
> Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre:
>
> But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
> Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
> Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
> And froze the genial current of the soul.
>
> . . . .
>
> Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
> The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
> Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
> Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes
. . .
Their lot forbade. . . .

Some such epitaph as this might be written on many a nameless grave in country churchyard or urban cemetery. It was said that in the Napoleonic armies every soldier carried a Field-Marshal's baton in his knapsack; and it is a fact that some of the ablest of Napoleon's lieutenants rose from the ranks. Why? Because in Republican France the superstition of the congenital inferiority of the lower classes had been temporarily swept away by the Revolution, and because the Republican tradition had been inherited by the Empire and respected by the Emperor, whose own genius had raised him from obscurity to supreme power, and who was on the look-out for talent in the armies that he led. In the British Army, where the soldiers fought "under the cold shade of aristocracy," the private who, had he been born in France, might have become a Field-Marshal, would probably have won his stripes, or at best become a subaltern, and gone no further. The constitution of things was against his rising to the height of his deserts. "His lot forbade" his advancement.

The experiment which the Republican War Ministers initiated and which Napoleon carried

on is of lasting interest and opens up a wide vista to speculative thought. Professor Bateson will perhaps contend that the Marshals who rose from the ranks were plums which had "got sown as wildings." But no: a Field-Marshal is, *in his own line*, a super-plum, not a plum; and where there is one super-plum there must be thousands and tens of thousands of plums. In the Napoleonic armies, as in the Republican, there was a temporary relaxation of a deadening pressure. If that concession could enable many soldiers, who would otherwise in all probability have lived and died in obscurity, to rise to the very highest grade of all, what might not a general equalizing of conditions do in the way of raising the lower classes to the mental level of the upper? This is a question which the romantic stories of such men as Ney, Murat, Hoche, Lannes, Junot, Augereau and others compel us to ask ourselves. In our attempts to answer it we can, I think, pass beyond the limits of mere conjecture. The "Egeria" of my book was the first to convince me that, under favourable conditions, foremost among which is an attitude of trust and encouragement on the part of the teacher, the village boy or girl can rival the child of the upper classes in all-round mental capacity—in resourcefulness, in initiative, in versatility, in intellectual power, in literary and artistic taste. Other teachers have since taught

me the same lesson. Not long after my discovery of "Utopia" the head master of an elementary school in the East of London showed me some admirable drawings done by his pupils. I asked him what proportion of his pupils could reach that level. He answered: "Had you asked me that question a year ago I would have said '5 per cent,' but now I can say '95 per cent.'" As a teacher of drawing he had recently changed his aims and methods. Had he not done so, he would have continued to take for granted that 95 per cent of his pupils had little or no capacity for drawing. More recently I was shown some thirty or forty poems written by girls in a higher standard elementary school in one of our northern manufacturing towns. The high level of feeling and expression reached in these poems astonished me.[1] The head mistress

[1] Here is one of the poems:

LATE OCTOBER

Patter of fitful rain,
Shiver of falling leaves,
And wail of wind which has left behind
The glory of fruit and sheaves,

Mist on the crowning hills,
Mist in the vales below,
And grief in the heart that has seen depart
Its summer of long ago.

A similar and equally successful experiment has been made by Miss Ruth M. Fletcher in one of the lower forms of a Girls' Municipal High School. "Original poetry by children,"

explained to me that being in need of "copy" for the school magazine, she encouraged the girls to try their hands at writing verse. The girls, who had long had access to a good school library, containing many volumes of poetry, responded with alacrity. The teacher added that "our poetry is only a very small part of our literature scheme,[1] the carrying out of which is to the children pure joy, and these poems are only first attempts." Similar discoveries of latent taste and talent in the average elementary school-child are constantly being made. They point to serious defects in our system or systems of education, which do so much for the child, of whatever social grade, and leave so little to his spontaneous activity, that his mind is still in large measure an unexplored land. If education could be reformed in the direction of setting children free to develop individuality and realize latent capacity, it would, I think, be found that

writes Miss Fletcher, "is an interesting subject, but space forbids full discussion here. Enough to state that I have experimented independently in this direction, and am amazed and delighted at the result. I believe that most intelligent children of this age have within them, mostly latent, a vein of poetry, simple and rhythmical, and need only the right stimulus to use and delight in the power." Most of Miss Fletcher's pupils would be of "bullace" breed, some being ex-elementary scholars and others the daughters of lower middle-class parents.

[1] This is quite true. The prose efforts of the children are as remarkable as their poems.

the mental ability of both the upper and the lower classes was much greater than we had imagined it to be. But it would not be found that the mental ability of the upper classes was appreciably greater than that of the lower. Such at least is the conviction which my recent educational experiences and my reinterpretation, in the light which they cast, of former experiences have forced upon my mind.

The idea that the upper classes are by nature morally and spiritually superior to the lower is a dangerous delusion, of which, for their own sakes, those who belong to the upper classes would do well to rid themselves. If the lower classes fill more than their share of our prison cells, the reason is that many of them are born into and reared in criminal surroundings, that they are beset by temptations to dishonesty and other forms of lawlessness to which the upper classes are not exposed, and that, in spite of the desire of our legislators to do justice to all classes, there is still one law for the rich and another for the poor.[1] Criminality is not viciousness. The lower classes may be more criminal than the upper, in the sense of being more frequently convicted of offences against the law, but they are certainly not more vicious. If anything, they are less selfish and less worldly. But this too can easily be explained. The disadvantages of environment

[1] See *The Law and the Poor*, by Judge Parry.

are not all on the side of the poor. The rich are exposed to temptations from which the poor are largely, if not wholly, exempt. It was said of old by one who taught with authority that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Did not Christ mean by this that outward prosperity, with its temptations to self-indulgence—a hydra-headed vice, to worldliness, with the perversion of ideals which it involves, and to arrogance, with its acceptance as final of an outward standard of value, is ever tending to distract the prosperous from the inward life? Bearing these things in mind let us hold the scales even between the two classes and say that on the moral and spiritual planes neither is inherently superior to the other. The present war has proved to demonstration that there are vast reserves of heroism and self-devotion in human nature, and that in this respect the upper classes are not more richly endowed than the lower, nor the lower classes than the upper. One of our officers, writing from the front, says of his men: "I'm not emotional, but . . . since I've been out here in the trenches I've had the water forced into my eyes, not once, but a dozen times, from sheer admiration and respect, by the action of rough rude chaps whom you'd never waste a second glance on in the streets of London, men who, so

far from being exceptional, are typical through and through, just the common street average. . . . Under the strain and stress of this savage existence these men show up for what they really are under their rough hides; they are jewel all through . . . and the daily round of their lives is simply full of little acts of self-sacrifice, generosity, and unstudied heroism." And our men at the front have often written in equivalent terms of their officers. The truth is that, in response to the stimulus of this tremendous war, sublime qualities are ever awaking which exist as possibilities in those hidden depths of our nature where distinctions of class and breeding are unknown, and which are therefore, in the real meaning of the phrase, characteristic of man as man. In the Kingdom of Heaven there is no such thing as "strain."

Thus the "inherent and congenital" superiority of the upper to the lower classes, which Professor Bateson seems to postulate, resolves itself, when carefully considered, into a doubtful superiority in physique. When we ask the upper classes to make good their claim to superiority in intellect, in morals, in spirituality, the evidence which they bring forward proves to be wholly inconclusive. On the higher levels of human nature such phrases as *well-born*, *high-born*, *well-bred*, *good birth*, *good breeding*, and their opposites have no meaning. Or rather, so far as they

have a meaning, they indicate superiority or inferiority in respect of inherited environment, not of breed. The infinitude which is of the essence of human nature is as much the birthright of the peasant or the miner as of the plutocrat or the peer. The biological theory of strain, when applied to human beings, may lend its countenance to those who are born into high places. But that proves nothing except that, like the arrogance which it seems to countenance, the theory, as an interpretation of human nature, is profoundly materialistic at heart. The philosophy of life which resolves psychology into biology is vitiated by one fundamental fallacy. It ignores the transforming, expanding, sublimating power of consciousness. It ignores the soul.

CHAPTER V

THE ANCESTRY OF THE SOUL

WHAT, then, does a man inherit from his lineal ancestors, near or remote? Is his heritage purely physical? If "Yes" is my answer to this question, I must at once modify it by reminding myself that on this plane of existence and in this life the physical and spiritual sides of man's nature cannot be disjoined. There is a physical side to spirituality just as there is a spiritual side to physique. *Expression*, for example, is a spiritual feature of the outer man, and as such is much more within a man's control than are the physical features which are transmitted to him by his parents and other lineal ancestors. A man cannot, by taking thought or action, alter the shape of his nose, unless indeed by his own folly he exposes it to the ravages of disease; but he can by his manner of living alter and even transform his expression. It is the same, *mutatis mutandis*, with the inner man, the soul. If we think of the soul as *character*, we see that there is a physical side to it, namely, *temperament*. If we think of it as *mentality* we

see that there is a physical side to it, namely, *brain power*. That temperament and brain power, though they seem to belong to the inner man, are in the main inherited (in the narrower sense of the word) is, I think, as certain as that expression, though it seems to belong to the outer man, is not inherited, or is so only in a minor degree.

But temperament and brain power are only the lines or surfaces of contact between the body and the soul. What of the soul itself? Have we any evidence that character, as distinguished from temperament, or that mind, as distinguished from brain power, is transmissible from father to son, or from ancestor to descendant? I think not. Such evidence as seems to be forthcoming is found, when carefully analysed, to be vitiated, either by lineal heredity having been credited with influences which really emanate from environment, or by temperament having been confused with character, and brain power with mind.

On the other hand there is, I think, positive evidence that the soul does not, or rather cannot, descend from father to son. I have given my reasons for believing that the average man has practically limitless reserves of spiritual and mental vitality, reserves which are not the less real because he may be unable to bring more than a very small part of them into action. In other words, I have given my reasons for thinking that on the higher levels of life our racial inherit-

ance is infinite. If I am right, the question which I have asked is answered. It would be as reasonable to suppose that the Gulf Stream could flow through a drainpipe as that the infinite reserves of mental and spiritual vitality with which each of us is endowed could be transmitted through the medium of a speck of protoplasm.

What, then, is the ancestry of the soul? We are now in a region of pure conjecture. When Professor Bateson tells us that "Shakespeare once existed as a speck of protoplasm no bigger than a pin's head," and that "to this nothing was added that would not equally well have served to build up a baboon or a rat," he is begging a very large question. Because he is an expert at biology he is claiming the right to lay down the law on a matter which is so great and has so many implications that "the soul of the wide world" is alone competent to deal with it. In doing this he is exceeding the warrant of his credentials, high as these doubtless are. It is possible that the statement which he makes so confidently is entirely wrong. It is possible that at a certain stage in the development of the Shakespearean speck of protoplasm, something very important was added to it, namely, the soul of Shakespeare. At any rate, the problem which Professor Bateson solves in this off-hand way infinitely transcends the province of any expert; and therefore, though no one is entitled

to dogmatize about it, anyone who will take the trouble to think is free to consider it.

The best way to approach such a problem is to examine the solutions of it that at present hold the field. Of the current solutions of the problem of the soul's origin there are four which deserve attention:

(1) The first is the theory of the *supernatural* creation of the soul.

(2) The second is the theory of the *protoplasmic* origin of the soul.

(3) The third is the theory of *epigenesis*, or the building up of the soul by environmental influences.

(4) The fourth is the theory of *reincarnation*, or the evolution of the soul through a sequence of earth-lives.

(1) According to the first of these theories, each soul in turn is created by the Supernatural God and enters the growing organism during its pre-natal life. This theory, which has the sanction of Christian theology, is rigidly predestinarian in tendency; and as, according to the same theology, the destiny of the individual is either eternal misery or eternal bliss, the theory in question lays a heavy responsibility on him whose creative will is ever peopling and repeopling the earth. Calvinism has accepted this responsibility on behalf of the Creator; but the other schools of Christian thought, shrinking

from the logical consequences of accepting it, have tried to minimize or to evade it. I will not press this objection to the orthodox theory; for my own objection to it strikes at its very roots. A theory which takes for granted the dualism of Nature and the Supernatural is conceived, as it seems to me, in error. But this is a point on which I do not propose to enlarge; for having elsewhere tried to show that our existing disorders and discontents are largely due to our having accepted supernaturalism as a philosophy of the Universe, and worked it out, both in theory and practice, into a philosophy of life,[1] I feel that I need not take pains to disprove this particular application of the fundamental postulate of supernaturalism. And even if I believed in the Supernatural, I should protest, in the name of logical economy, against supernatural causes being invoked to account for natural phenomena while the resources of natural causation were still unexhausted.

(2) I will therefore pass on to the second theory. If the first is spiritually predestinarian, the second is physically fatalistic. In the two sentences which I have quoted from Professor Bateson's Address the protoplasmic theory is set forth with uncompromising directness. I have given my reasons for rejecting this theory. Posing as

[1] See, in particular, *The Creed of Buddha*, Chap. VIII, and *What Is and What Might Be*, Chap. I.

a reasoned conclusion it resolves itself into the assumption that the " significance " of " nature " (lineal heredity) as a factor in human development is " overwhelmingly greater " than that of " nurture " (environment). This assumption resolves itself into another, namely, that the laws of the plant and animal worlds govern human life, govern it so rigorously that the solution of psychological problems rests with biology, not with psychology. The positive evidence for the " overwhelmingly greater significance of nature " is not merely inconclusive, but actually admits of being so interpreted as to point in the opposite direction; for again and again we find that traits and tendencies which are supposed to be " inherited " are really due to the racial or generic nature of man, which seems to be infinitely adaptable and resourceful, reacting to the stimulus of an infinitely comprehensive and variable environment. But my chief objection to the protoplasmic theory is that in the act of accounting for the soul it abolishes it. For in order to pass the soul through the narrow channel of a " speck of protoplasm " it must needs deprive it of its infinitude; and to deprive it of its infinitude is to destroy its identity; for consciousness, which differentiates man from all other living things, is the very principle of infinitude in his life. If the soul is nothing more than a function of the body, the protoplasmic theory

of its origin is obviously correct. But in that case the soul is non-existent; and the body, with its powers and functions, is the whole man. If Shakespeare once existed as a speck of protoplasm, and if to this nothing was added that would not equally well have served to build up a baboon or a rat, then the soul of Shakespeare was no more of a reality than the soul of a baboon or a rat.[1] What then? Will this biological solution of the master problem of psychology permanently content the biologist? No: he is no "vitalist," and sooner or later, constrained by the logic of his own conceptions, he will either have to abandon the protoplasmic theory as inadequate or allow a mechanical solution of the same problem to take its place. Life, as the biologist who resolves psychology into biology conceives it, is bound in the iron fetters of necessity. The constraining forces of heredity, acting through the speck of protoplasm, are irresistible. The biologist will probably admit that a man can modify his environment and to that extent react on his destiny; but this concession will do nothing to lift the cloud of physical fatalism with which his theory of the soul overshadows man's life. For the power of modifying environment is as much inherent in the speck of proto-

[1] I mean by this that it belonged to the same order of reality (or unreality). The difference between it and the soul of the baboon or the rat was a difference of degree, not of kind.

plasm which will become a man as any other of its constituent elements; and when reaction on destiny is itself predestined, it is an illusion to feel that one is free.

(3) The third theory is at once contradictory of and complementary to the second. The basis of it is recognition, *by another school of biologists*, of the fact that "nurture is inconceivably more important than nature." It has been expounded by Dr. Chalmers Mitchell in his instructive book *Evolution and the War*. Dr. Chalmers Mitchell is dealing with the causes of national differentiation; but his arguments apply with equal force to the causes of individual differentiation. His criticism of Mendelian assumptions is outspoken and direct. He considers that Professor Bateson's "bold pronouncements" in Australia have "opened the flood-gates to dogmatic quackery." And when Professor Bateson tells his audience that "with little hesitation we can now declare that the potentialities and aptitudes, physical as well as mental, sex, colours, powers of work or of invention, liability to diseases, possible duration of life, and the other features by which the members of a mixed population differ from each other, are determined from the moment of fertilization" his critic observes that for the inclusion of "mental potentialities and aptitudes in such a generalization . . . there is no scrap of positive evidence." He adds that "there is

nothing but theory to support the proposition that in the case of man nature 'has an overwhelmingly greater significance' than nurture."

What makes this criticism the more significant is that Dr. Chalmers Mitchell's own standpoint is strictly physiological. It is true that he lays great stress on the part that consciousness and the sense of freedom play in human life; but though he deprecates Bergson's attempt "to associate consciousness and the sense of freedom not merely with human life but with all life," and though he holds that "consciousness and freedom, purpose and intelligence," are not "to be ascribed to lowly animals," he yet believes "with Darwin, that as the body of man has been evolved from the body of animals, so the intellectual, emotional, and moral faculties of man have been evolved from the qualities of animals." Nor does he "shrink from the implications even of the phrase that thought is a secretion of the brain as bile is a secretion of the liver." How, then, has the soul of man, as he reads its history, been evolved? "By the moulding pressure of environment," is his answer to this question. In his opinion "the most important of the moulding forces that produce the differences in nationality are epigenetic, that is to say, they are imposed on the hereditary material and have to be reimposed on each generation." And what is true of the differences in nationality is true of

the differences in individuality. "It is after the Miltonoplasm (the germ of the future Milton) has grown into a sentient human being that the factors most potent in shaping the direction, quality, and value of his mental and emotional output come into operation. These factors are in his environment, not in himself: they are products of the 'Kultur' of the nation in which he lives, and they, at least, are created by human will and are subject to human will." So far as "these epigenetic agencies . . . acting on the mind and emotions" are concerned, "the mind and the body of the infant are neutral, clean sheets on which many kinds of writing may be impressed." From these passages I gather that the epigenesists transfer activity from the organism to the environment, and substitute for the physiological conception of the organism reacting to the environment, the more mechanical conception of the environment moulding the organism, moulding its "mind and emotions" as well as its body. But whence does the environment derive its plastic force? The answer to this question is a startling paradox. "The factors most potent in shaping the direction, quality, and value of" a man's "mental and emotional output . . . are created by human will and are subject to human will." How can this be? How can the environment derive its plastic force from the victim of its own plastic pressure?

How can a "neutral clean sheet" develop into a "creative will"? To cover a sheet of paper with script will not, as far as I can see, give it the power of creating the writer's pen and ink, not to speak of his right hand, his mind, and his will. Dr. Chalmers Mitchell "asserts as a biological fact, that the moral law is as real and as external to man as the starry vault." If this is so, how can it be said that "its creation and sustenance are the crowning glory of man." To criticize in detail a theory which entangles itself in such paradoxes would be a waste of time. The objections to it are at once fundamental and obvious. Until Dr. Chalmers Mitchell can explain to us how the transition, in the life of man, from absolute passivity to the highest conceivable form of activity is effected, I must be allowed to hold that the epigenetic, like the protoplasmic theory of the soul, has failed to make good.

(4) When experts flatly contradict one another on matters of vital importance, the amateur instinctively assumes that the truth lies between them, that both are right and both wrong, and that what is needed is a larger and more comprehensive conception, belonging perhaps to a higher level of thought, by which their respective theories will be alternately justified and condemned. The protoplasmic and the epigenetic theories of the soul embody the attempts of

scientific experts to solve the central problem of psychology in terms of biological concepts. So far as I know, these are the only biological theories of the soul that hold the field ; and as they cancel one another, I am driven to conclude that biology cannot do the work of psychology, that the soul must be accepted on its own evidence, and that all attempts to account for it on physiological grounds must be abandoned as futile.

Now to accept the soul on its own evidence is to accept without reserve the revelation of the growing and deepening light of consciousness. For what is essential in the outgrowth of consciousness is that an inward source of light is bearing witness to itself in the world-revealing rays which it casts, just as the dawning sun reveals the treasures and wonders of earth and in doing so bears witness to itself. That inward source of light is what we call the soul or self. As the soul becomes aware of itself and begins to distinguish between itself and the world which it looks out upon, in the very act of guaranteeing a dependent reality to the latter, it claims intrinsic reality for itself. Recognition of the validity of this claim is the basic assumption of psychology ; and if we reject the rival theories of the biologists, we must make this assumption our starting-point in our quest of the true theory of the soul.

Can we do otherwise ? If consciousness, with

the sense of freedom which accompanies it, is, as Dr. Chalmers Mitchell contends, " the centre from which all science, all philosophy, all emotion, must set out in exploration of the universe and to which they must all return " ; if it " transforms all the qualities and faculties acquired by human beings from the animal world and is the foundation of free and intelligent existence " ; if it " puts man and the nations he makes above the laws of the unconscious world " ; if it " gives man the power of being at once the actor, the spectator, and the critic " ; if it " enables him to distinguish between self and not self " ; if it " brings with it the sense of responsibility and reality,"—if consciousness is all this, and does all these things, and if all attempts to account for it on physiological grounds are, as Dr. Chalmers Mitchell insists, disastrous failures (his own attempt being tantamount to a confession that the mystery of its origin is impenetrable), what course is open to us but to accept its explanation of itself? Now what consciousness tells us about itself is that its subject, that which is conscious—the soul, as we call it—is not merely as real as the outward world to which its body or outward self belongs, but has a higher kind of reality which it—the soul—is alone competent to investigate and value.

> There shines no light save its own light to show
> Itself unto itself.

Let us now go back to the protoplasmic and the epigenetic theories, and, assuming that the truth lies between these, let us ask ourselves how far each is right, and how far wrong. The protoplasmists are right when they affirm that the future man is in the human embryo; but they are wrong when they identify the human embryo with the fertilized germ-cell; for in so doing they bring the higher developments of human life under the control of physical necessity, and thereby limit unduly the possibilities of the future man, de-spiritualizing his spiritual life, lowering him to the animal level of existence, and ignoring or at best minimizing his power of transforming himself by reacting to the stimulus of environment. The epigenesists are right when they insist that the "possession of consciousness and the sense of freedom is a vital and overmastering distinction between man and beast"; they are right when they affirm that the possibilities of human development, under the transforming influence of consciousness and in response to the stimulus of environment, are practically boundless, even within the limits of each individual life; they are right when they contend that the differences between man and man, as between nation and nation, are largely environmental, not congenital; but they are wrong when they ascribe quasi-creative activity to the environment and mere passivity and receptive-

ness to the human organism, and they complicate their error and make nonsense of their philosophy when they go on to speak of the environment as the product of man's creative will.

What we need, then, is a theory of the soul, which will hold, with the protoplasmists, that growth is always achieved by reaction to the stimulus of environment, not by passive acceptance of its "moulding" pressure; and yet will hold, with the epigenesists, that in each individual life the possibilities of development, in response to the influence of environment, are infinitely great; a theory which will affirm that each human embryo—the embryo of the future serf not less than that of the future emperor, the embryo of the future fool not less than that of the future philosopher, the embryo of the future felon not less than that of the future saint—is a complex of limitless possibilities, mental, moral, and spiritual, as well as physical; which will affirm, in other words, that the racial or characteristically human element in the new-born infant enormously outweighs the lineal or physically inherited element, and that therefore, instead of being at the mercy of the tendencies which are inherent in his own "blood," each human being is free—(apart from the disabilities which may be imposed upon him by the particular environment into which he is born)—to range at will through the world which consciousness opens to him, and to

develop himself in response to its manifold influences by drawing upon the reserves of potentiality that surge up, when called upon to energize, out of the inexhaustible fountain of his "soul."

Such a theory has long been familiar to the exoteric as well as the esoteric thought of the Far East. According to the doctrine of Reincarnation, the individual soul has not been supernaturally created, has not entered the world in a speck of protoplasm, has not been built up by the moulding pressure of a particular environment, but has descended—from an obscure and infinitely distant source—along the line of its own continuous existence, bringing with it into each new earth-life a heritage bequeathed to it by its own former selves, and leaving behind it at the end of each earth-life the same heritage—but enriched or impoverished by the part that it has played on earth—for transmission to its own future selves. This theory accepts the soul on its own valuation, and, recognizing its potential infinitude, allows it, not years but æons for the work of self-realization, thereby substituting for the idea of the soul being inherited from one's lineal ancestors, the idea of the soul inheriting from itself.

That we may the better discern the trend of this theory, let us contrast it with the protoplasmic, with which, as it happens, it has most in common,

but to which it is also most directly opposed. We have seen that on the physical plane of his being a man inherits, lineally, from his own line of ancestors, racially, from the whole human race; his racial inheritance being transmitted to him through the channel of lineal heredity, and modified—stamped with the birth-mark of individuality—in transmission. "It is exactly the same," says the protoplasmist, "on the higher planes of man's being." "It is the same," says the believer in reincarnation, "but with a difference." On the higher, as on the lower planes, the distinction between lineal and racial heredity holds good, and a man's racial inheritance is transmitted to him through the channel of lineal heredity, and modified—stamped with the birth-mark of individuality—in transmission; but on the higher planes a man inherits, racially, not from the human race only, but from the fountain of all soul-life, and lineally, not from his own line of ancestors, but from the line of his own former selves.

There are difficulties in the way of accepting this theory, which I do not seek to minimize. The conception of the soul as super-physical does not readily harmonize with our instinctive assumption that the physical plane is the only plane of *natural* existence, that the world is in itself what it seems to be to our normal perceptive faculties, that the limitations of our bodily senses

determine the boundaries of the Universe. But this assumption, with the fatal contraction of the idea of Nature which it involves, is a mere superstition, and, as an argument against the theory of reincarnation, carries no weight. The failure of biology to do the work of psychology compels us to accept the soul on its own evidence ; and when once we have taken this step, we must not shrink from its consequences, however irreconcilable these may be with the unformulated axioms of popular thought.

For my own part, I feel in my heart of hearts that the theory of reincarnation holds the key to the riddle of man's existence ; but how the key works I cannot pretend to explain in full. In postulating a plane of being which is at once natural and super-physical, the theory leads us into a world of mystery in which the mind is not at home and cannot expect to find its way. Any attempt that I might make to work out the philosophy of reincarnation would be largely imaginative, and would therefore reflect my own personality and lead at last, in the event of controversy, to the logical *impasse* which Cardinal Newman indicated when he reminded us that where there is no common measure of minds there can be no common measure of arguments. I will therefore content myself with pointing out that the doctrine of reincarnation accepts and even insists upon the fundamental truths which

the two biological theories of the soul respectively postulate, but to which, owing to their refusing to entertain the hypothesis of the super-physical, they do less than justice. The first of these is that the future man is in the human embryo, whatever that may be. The second is that consciousness, with the sense of freedom which accompanies it, is the differential feature of the growing man, and that the transforming influence of consciousness on human life is unlimited. If we accept the former conception, while rejecting the hypothesis of the super-physical, we must, with Professor Bateson, identify the human embryo with the fertilized germ-cell; but in that case, if we accept the second conception, we are faced by the difficulty which the theory of epigenesis seeks to evade—that inasmuch as consciousness is the Protean principle in man's being, the principle of limitless transformation, it cannot itself come under the control of physical necessity, and therefore that the subject of consciousness—that which is becoming aware of itself—cannot pass through the narrow channel of physical generation and lineal heredity. According to the doctrine of reincarnation, the future man, with all his possibilities, up to the last term of ideal perfection, is in the human embryo; but as consciousness is the differential feature of his being, until the subject of consciousness has united itself with his growing body, the

human embryo, as distinguished from the embryo of the human body, has not been formed. When that union has taken place, the human embryo —the new-born infant—is ready to start on its career of self-realization; but it is no "neutral clean sheet" waiting for "writing to be impressed" on it by its environment, but a living organism, with limitless reserves of potentiality, which it is ready to realize, not by passive acceptance of the impress of environment, but by active reaction to its stimulus.

Thus the doctrine of reincarnation, while bringing the life of man in its totality under the master law of growth, withdraws the life of the soul from bondage to the laws of physical growth. In other words, it recognizes two kinds of heredity —the heredity of the body, which inherits from the man's lineal ancestors, and the heredity of the soul, which inherits from its own former selves.

This conception throws light on many problems. In particular, it composes the quarrel between heredity and environment, for it enables us to see that there is no such quarrel. When Professor Bateson affirms that "nature . . . has an overwhelmingly greater significance" than "nurture," he is as wide of the mark as is Dr. Chalmers Mitchell when he affirms that "nurture is inconceivably more important than nature." On the higher, as on the lower, levels of man's

being, nature and nurture, heredity and environment, are in very truth the warp and the woof of the tissue of his life. As a controlling factor in human development, heredity counts for no more than environment; and environment counts for no more than heredity. Each in turn counts for everything; but neither counts for anything apart from the other. Each postulates the other. Each is complementary to the other. Each measures the other. But only because each is infinite. The nascent soul is a complex of infinite possibilities. It realizes, or begins to realize, these by reacting to the stimulus of an infinitely wide and infinitely changeful environment. Apart from such an environment, its possibilities would remain as dormant as those which are wrapped up in a grain of mummy wheat. If its heredity were physical and limited, its power of reacting to environment would be strictly limited, and the limits of its activity would be strictly predetermined; and we should then have to admit, not that nature counted for more than nurture in the life of the soul, but that necessity counted for everything and freedom for nothing. But in that case there would be no soul. The physical side of man's being would be the only side. When we spoke of the soul, of consciousness, of freedom, of spirituality, we should be cheating ourselves with empty words. The doctrine of reincarnation, by its conception

of super-physical heredity, delivers us from these pessimistic conclusions. For it opens down the ages an ample channel for the journeying soul, and so allows it in each successive earth-life to take up anew the task of self-development, ready to measure, with the infinitude of its inherited potentialities, the infinitude of the environing world. In fine, in the doctrine of reincarnation we have the only theory of the origin of the individual man, which, without invoking the Supernatural, safeguards the soul.

It is possible that some persons have attained to certitude in these matters. If there are such persons they are in a more advanced stage of mental and psychical development than I am, and truth, for them, means something wider and deeper, something more absorbing and constraining, than it means for me. For both these reasons they, of all people, would be the last to wish me to accept their teaching until I could see for myself that it was true. For when we are dealing with the master problems of life, the dogmatic attitude, with its implied assumption that truth is a thing to possess rather than to be possessed by, is symptomatic, not of certitude, but of secret self-distrust. None are so tolerant or so unwilling to proselytize as those who really know. I am not of the brotherhood of those who really know, but I am not wholly blind to

my own limitations. And so, speaking as an ordinary man to ordinary men, I repeat what I said at the beginning of this chapter—that when we are considering the origin of the soul we are in a region of pure conjecture, in which anyone with a spirit of adventure is free to theorize, but in which no one may count himself to have apprehended. My spirit of adventure has led me to examine the four theories of the origin of the soul which seem at present to hold the field; and I have now satisfied myself that the most illuminating of these and the least open to destructive criticism is the theory of a reincarnating and self-developing soul or ego, with which the Far East has been familiar for thousands of years.[1] Further than this I have not gone and have no wish to go.

[1] The theory of reincarnation does not solve the problem of the soul's origin. Indeed it is the only one of the four theories which does not pretend to do so. What it does is to throw back the dawn of the soul's life into so dark and remote a past that the problem of the development of the soul takes the place in our minds of the problem of its origin.

CHAPTER VI

THE RANGE OF THE SOUL

THERE is a principle of infinitude in man which we call consciousness. We mean by consciousness the dawn of its own light on the soul. Therefore the real principle of infinitude in man's life is the soul itself. I have tried to prove that each of us has limitless potentialities waiting to be realized, limitless reserves of mental and spiritual vitality waiting to be mobilized. This is one aspect of the infinitude of the soul. Is it possible to advance from this somewhat negative conception of infinitude to a more positive conception ? I think it is.

Let us look at the matter from a somewhat different point of view. Let us start with consciousness of self. In the act of being conscious of my self I am conscious of the permanent and inherent unity of my self, but I am not conscious of its limits. I cannot define its boundaries in any way. I know that it is intimately connected with what I call my body, and that it can make the weal or woe of the body its own. But I also

know that it can identify itself with things which seem either to be outside itself or to include itself, and that it can make their weal or woe its own. For example, I can identify myself with my family, with my clan, with my city, with my country, with the whole brotherhood of humanity. I can also identify myself with my school, my university, my profession, my guild or trade union, my political party, my church or religious sect. I can even identify myself with impersonal causes of various kinds, such as the reform of education, the reform of social conditions, the pursuit of beauty or truth. In each of these cases I feel a sense of proprietorship in the community with which I identify myself. I am proud of its achievements as if they were my own. I take shame to myself for its failures. I sympathize with its troubles and sorrows.

But looking around me I see that some persons have what I may call narrower selves than others, that they do not readily identify themselves with the communities to which they belong, or the causes that might be expected to appeal to them ; that the communal spirit is wanting in them or is only developed so far as it may serve their own selfish ends ; that they are wrapped up in their own bodily well-being and their own material pursuits and possessions. On the other hand, I see that there are many persons whose capacity for losing themselves in communal interests and

impersonal causes I can but envy and revere. Again, looking back to my own earlier life I see that the range of my self is much wider now than it was then, that I have more and larger interests, that my power of identifying myself with other persons and other things has gained to an appreciable extent. From these facts I argue that the self varies, as regards the actual range of its life, from person to person, and that it is capable of growing and expanding, of widening the sphere of its sympathies and interests, within the limits of each individual life. And this expansion in the range of the self is not accompanied by any diminution of what I may call the vividness of its consciousness. On the contrary, as the self widens, its consciousness seems to grow more vivid and more alert.

The question now arises: Are there any limits to this process of expansion? Is there any *a priori* reason why the self—the soul, as we may now call it—should not be able to identify itself with the widest of all communities, whatever that may be? I know of no such reason. The life of the community is the same, ideally if not actually, for all the members of the community, each of whom can, if he pleases, identify his individual life with the common life. And however wide the community may be, this law holds good. The fact that I am an ardent patriot, that I identify my self—its pains and pleasures,

its hopes and fears, its aims and interests—with my country, does not prevent millions of other persons from doing exactly the same. Nor is there any *a priori* reason why each member of the human family should not develop a sense of oneness with all his kind. Now the widest of all communities—wider even than the Kingdom of Man—is the Kingdom of God, the Universe itself. In what relation does each of us stand to this all-embracing unity? The universal life is one and indivisible. We cannot, for example, draw a hard and fast line between the spiritual and the physical life of man, or between the life of man and the lives of other living things. And this universal life, in its undivided totality, ranging between the poles of physical energy and ideal spirituality, and having—one may well believe—inner and innermost lives of its own, is what we mean when we speak of the soul of the Universe. But the One Life takes innumerable outward forms; and in each of these cases of self-manifestation it is, as a rule, content to move in a narrow channel, walled in by habit and instinct, untroubled by any message from the infinite sea. But when the One Life enters the channel of man's existence, there comes a profound and far-reaching change. The lesser life begins to be aware—faintly and dimly at first, then by degrees more and more clearly—of its oneness with the larger life. This growing sense

of awareness is the dawn of consciousness. Of the transforming influence of consciousness on human life I have already spoken. It reveals to man a universe outside himself, and a universe within himself, and it suggests that these two are ultimately one. Also, since perception of the infinite is of its essence, it tends to raise to infinity all man's powers and tendencies. I have asked if there are any limits to this process of self-expansion, any limitations to the capacity which is inherent in each of us, for going outside himself into a communal life. Consciousness, with its message from the universal to the individual life, is the abiding answer to this question. The expansion of the self will not cease till the individual soul has fully responded to the appeal of the widest of all communities—the universal life.

We now begin to see the meaning, for man, of the process of self-realization or growth. What the oak-tree is to the acorn, that the universal life, the soul of the Universe, is to the human embryo. The purpose of the process of growth is to enable the individual to draw up into himself and convert into himself the infinite life which underlies his own. And the goal of this process is the consciously realized identity of the individual—of each of a billion individuals—with the universal soul. Till that goal has been reached the process of growth is incomplete, the

true self has not been found. When the goal has been reached the individual has fulfilled his destiny. For, in realizing, fully and finally, his oneness with the universal life, he has entered into complete possession of his racial inheritance, which has expanded, while he was making good his claim to it, to cosmic dimensions; he has grown to the fulness of his predestined stature; and he is at last free to say "I am I."

But is his stature predestined? Is he growing, as other living things are growing, to a predetermined form? I asked myself this question at the beginning of this work, and since I asked it I have been trying to clear the ground for my answer to it. It is possible that the whole course of cosmic life has been predetermined. It is even conceivable that the whole drama of the Universe, as it unfolds itself for us, is but the self-realization of a seed which has fallen from a parent tree. But if we are to apply the word "predetermined" to such movements as these, we must remind ourselves at the outset that we are using the word in a sense other than that which it ordinarily bears. When we say that a movement which is infinite in all its dimensions has been predetermined, we are obviously subordinating the idea of totality to that of development, and the idea of eternity, which is the temporal aspect of totality, to that of time;

and this means that words are failing us, as indeed they are bound to do when we try to bring to the birth conceptions which exceed the compass of our thought.

But what of the individual life ? We may well believe that this has its appropriate place in what I have called the drama of the Universe, and we may therefore say, if we please, that it has been predetermined by an Infinite Will. But here, too, the word "predetermined" will do less than justice to the idea that we are struggling to express. For what is central in the evolution of the individual life is the dawn of consciousness; and consciousness is on the one hand the principle of infinitude in man's being, and is on the other hand accompanied, as it dawns upon us, by the growing sense of freedom, the sense of being able to choose among competing courses of action. Now what is predetermined, in the accepted sense of the word, is both subject to and limited by the stress of what we call necessity; and as the idea of freedom is antithetical to that of necessity, it is clear that to speak of the growth of the individual soul as predetermined is to predicate limitation and subjection to necessity of what is ideally, and therefore essentially, limitless and free.

Let us say, then, in answer to the question which I have asked myself, that, though the general idea of the destiny of the soul being pre-

determined will always haunt us, the growth of the individual soul is not predetermined, as we, with our experiences of purposing, planning, and executing, understand that word; that on the contrary, as each of us has infinite resources outside himself to draw upon and infinite potentialities within himself to realize, so he is free to use these or to misuse them, and in doing so to help or to hinder the process of his growth. And if his freedom is at first a mere possibility, he can sustain himself with the thought that freedom, like every other human power and prerogative, grows by being exercised; that the nearer he approaches to oneness with the One Life—which, being universal, is presumably self-determined—the freer he becomes from that constraining pressure from without which we call necessity; and that when, if ever, he realizes his sublime destiny, he will have united himself with the fountain-head of all destiny and will therefore have worked out to its last act a drama which, if predetermined in *any* sense of that word, was predetermined by his own ideal self.

This is but a tentative and provisional treatment of one of the greatest of all problems. If the growth of the human spirit is indeed accompanied by the outgrowth of freedom, and if growth is indeed the realization of potentiality and therefore the fulfilment of destiny, we are up against a tremendous practical paradox. By fulfilling his

destiny man acquires the power of mastering destiny. By yielding to an irresistible pressure he becomes free either to resist that pressure or to intensify it. By growing—blindly, helplessly, instinctively—he wins the right to direct and control the process of his growth. How can these things be? How can self-determination be predetermined? How can the very stress of necessity set its victim free? In the last sentence of the foregoing paragraph I have perhaps indicated the direction in which the explanation of this mystery is to be sought. For I have suggested that man's destiny is to become one with the fountain-head of all destiny and that the drama of his evolution has therefore been predetermined by his own ideal self. But to work out this solution of the problem, to work out the idea that spiritual necessity, compulsion from within, *is* freedom, would involve a re-treatment of the whole subject and would carry me far beyond the scope of this work.

We can, however, now answer the question, or at least give *an* answer to the question, which started us on our present adventure. We asked ourselves what limits, if any, there were to the transforming influence of education. Ideally there are no limits. Two universes are at the service of those who educate—the universe of the environing world and the universe of the child's unrealized self. Through their control

of the former universe and through their personal influence they can stimulate the latter universe into limitless activity and so work changes in character and mentality which an outsider might well regard as miraculous. There are teachers in this country who have wrought such miracles, not once, but many times. That they have been able to work them is due to their insight into the laws of human nature and their readiness to co-operate with its tendencies; and their miracles are therefore in no sense miraculous. On the contrary, their type of education is as near to the intrinsic realities of Nature as the normal type, which paralyzes natural activity and arrests natural growth, is far from them.

This conclusion lays immense responsibilities on the teacher; but her responsibilities will always be matched by her opportunities and should therefore be counted as a privilege, not a burden. The evolution of soul-life seems to be the purpose of the Universe. If it is, the executants of that purpose are the real rulers of the world.

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